

TOUCHSTONE

E whaia ana te putaketanga o nga whakapono mo tenei ao hurihuri
EXPLORING FAITH ISSUES FOR TODAY

Dying church resurrected as community centre



By Cory Miller

On the corner of Auckland's Rosebank Road and Orchard Street, amidst an array of industrial sites sits a small and apparently unremarkable building. But hidden behind the peeling exterior exists the vibrant community of the Avondale Union Parish, who are working together to transform their church into a community centre.

The members of the parish share a desire to empower their culturally diverse community, create hope for the people of Avondale, change their lives and create a future. They seek to provide ministry for the community, working alongside Rev Vaituulala Ngahe to develop ways of being community facing.

Key to establishing this goal is the community centre. It will provide a means to establish working relationships with the community through pastoral care, outreach programmes and educational opportunities.

Avondale Parish is made up of two churches, Avondale Union Church and Rosebank Peninsula Church. In recent times the Rosebank Church suffered a

Top: Last month Mormon Helping Hands sent a work brigade to Avondale Union Parish to help restore it community centre. Left: A homework club is one of the community services Avondale community centre offers.

decline in membership, yet Vai did not believe in giving up on its potential.

"Closing the church was not the solution, it would be more beneficial to use its resources for the community" he says. "We then decided to combine the two congregations at one site."

The move enabled the Rosebank Peninsula Church building to be utilised primarily as a community centre. Though extensive renovations are required, the Parish still makes use of the facilities and is developing new initiatives for it.

For example, in the beginning of March a Homework Club began weekly meetings there. It caters for the large contingent of young people who attend nearby schools. This programme was developed in response to statistics that showed 35 percent of those living in Avondale have no qualification, in comparison to 18 percent in Auckland as a whole.

Registered teacher Siu Kaufanga, who is a member of the parish, offered her time freely to the Homework Club because she wants the youth to take pride in themselves and their education.

The Avondale community centre is intended to be a supportive facility that will provide encouragement and information for people to make good life choices.

The centre's services will not be limited to just the members of the church but available to people in the wider community.

"It is the community who will benefit. The church should not be distanced from the community, they should work within the community for the people," says Vai.

As well as the homework club, there

are plans for various other support and outreach programmes, such as a Fono. This is an information service that can help people understand the various resources that are available to them through government agencies, such as Immigration, WINZ, the Ministry of Health, and Housing New Zealand.

The centre is still a work in progress, and in these difficult economic times funding is proving to be a difficult hurdle. The Parish is constantly searching for sponsorship that will enable them to go full steam ahead with the community centre.

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Axing Bioethics Council blow to democracy say critics

By Marie Sherry

The government's recent decision to close the Bioethics Council of New Zealand has raised concern about citizens' ability to have input into major ethical issues.

Environment Minister Nick Smith says he has discontinued the council to help ensure the Government can afford to meet its priorities for the environment in difficult economic times.

The Bioethics Council was an independent advisory committee to government on ethical controversies brought about by advances in biology and medicine such as genetic engineering and cloning. The Environment Ministry assisted the council by providing administrative support and research material. This work no longer fits with the Ministry's function, given the priorities indicated by the new Government.

"The work the Bioethics Council was doing was somewhat duplicated by other Government committees," Nick Smith says.

"This included the Ministry of Health's National Advisory Committee and Advisory Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ACART), and the Environmental Risk Management Authority and its Maori advisory Committee, Nga Kaihau Tikanga Taiao. It makes no sense for multiple Government agencies to do essentially the same work."

However, Bioethics Council chairman Dr Martin Wilkinson says an independent review of the council found no other body in government had the broad range and deliberative focus of the Bioethics Council, and there was no duplication.

"What we did was unique. The Government is wrong to think there's no need for a deliberative or broad approach because someone else is already doing it,

because they're not," Martin says.

Since 2002, the council has issued major reports on pre-birth testing, animal-to-human transplantation, and the use of human genes in other organisms. The council was heavily involved in decisions about research on human embryos and has given advice on legislation and ministry policies on many aspects of biotechnology.

"We are pleased that much of the council's advice has been followed," Martin says.

"Deliberating with the people of New Zealand has been at the heart of the council's way of working. As we have learned over the years of our operation, and as other countries are saying more and more, government policies are fairer, more democratic and more successful when citizens are properly informed and given the chance to shape what government does."

The risk of dealing with bioethical issues without the council is bad policy, knee-jerk reactions or polarisation, Martin says.

Helen Bichan was a member of the Bioethics Council from its inception in 2002 until June last year. She is very disappointed by the decision to close the council.

"The previous Government supported the idea that the public should be involved. There was public participation in the development of the question and the framing of the issues," she says.

People with different cultural backgrounds, ages, and interests came together in a safe and facilitated way to address the issues. This could have been built on but it was cut short.

"The council was aware that a number of issues people talked about were defused by having a setting to discuss them in.

"Science and technology are pretty good at explaining things, but for a number of people there's a naïve assumption that if you explain it, people will agree with it. We found that, while people had a great respect for science and certainly enjoyed its benefits, the sort of things that communities know about, such as relationships and whakapapa, and their wisdom needs to be part of the discussion, because it's a different way of framing the world."

InterChurch Bioethics Council (ICBC) chairperson Rev Dr Barbara Peddie says without the Bioethics Council of New Zealand there would be no bioethics committee, independent of any lobby group, to debate issues of public interest such as euthanasia, animal-to-human transplants, and the development of foods matched to human genotypes.

The ICBC represents the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches of New Zealand and includes people with scientific, medical, ethical, cultural, educational and theological expertise.

In a letter addressed to Prime Minister John Key, the ICBC strongly urges the Government to reconsider the closure of the Bioethics Council.

Barbara believes the ethnical, spiritual and cultural issues surrounding science require constant monitoring and consultation.

"This is best served by a dedicated monitoring group such as the Bioethics Council of New Zealand, who can then raise appropriate issue with Government," she says.

"An important role of the Bioethics Council of New Zealand was to be forward looking and develop bioethical policies for various scientific advances before the need arises. Again this involves dialogue and education which is best served by a dedicated, publicly-funded body independent of any lobby group."

Barbara says New Zealand has been at the leading edge in deliberative democracy and of debates over issues of public interest such as genetic engineering. The formation of the Bioethics Council with its roles of dialogue and education was an example of this.

Methodists of all stripes to gather at evangelism conference



George Freeman

International speakers are among those who will address the World Methodist Evangelism Institute's Equipt 09 regional conference in Ngaruawahia at the end of this month. The multi-cultural workshop will present creative

and inclusive ways to the bring gospel to our communities.

Two of the Keynote speakers at Equipt 09 are prominent figures in world Methodism: Rev Dr Jong Chun Park and Rev Dr George Freeman.

Jong Chun Park will speak on the subject of 'good news for the pluralistic world'. His workshop will deal with the challenge of religious pluralism and the great opportunity of world evangelism in the 21st century.

He is professor of systematic theology at Methodist Theological University in Seoul, Korea. He is also currently chair of the World Methodist Council's Theological Education Committee and co-president of the Oxford Institute of the Methodist Theological Study.

George Freeman is the general secretary of the World Methodist Council, which links together the 70 million Christians in the Methodist/Wesleyan tradition. From the USA, he has a unique insight into Methodist/Wesleyan churches world-wide.

In New Zealand he will seek to ensure that the church does its job of helping people to be reconciled to God. He has been reported as warning that, "if the church does not disciple the nations, the nations will disciple the church."

Equipt 09 includes takes place April 28th-May 1st. It includes workshops on the use of film and the creative arts, communicating with post-moderns, older congregations, and evangelism with the poor.

Confirmed keynote speakers include two leaders of the World Methodist Evangelism Institute, Bishop Robert Fannin and Dr Eddie Fox.

Other speakers will be World Methodist Council general secretary Rev Dr George Freeman, NZ Church of the Nazarene superintendent Dr Neville Bartle, Vision Network NZ national director Glyn Carpenter, MCNZ Mission Resourcing director Rev Nigel Hanscamp, and Laidlaw College lecturer Rev Dr Siosifa Lokotui.

For further information contact registrar.equipt@gmail.com.

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Church leaders' summit strikes note of hope in face of recession



Church leaders who gathered with NZCCSS (from left) Catholic Archbishop John Dew, former Moderator Presbyterian Church Pamela Tankersley, Anglican Archbishop David Moxon, Methodist Church President Jill van de Geer, and Territorial Commander-elect of the Salvation Army Donald Bell.

On the day the government hosted its highly publicised Jobs Summit, another group gathered to discuss the recession and how it is affecting New Zealanders.

Leaders of the five mainline Churches met with leaders of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) to discuss how to best provide support for those affected by the global economic crisis.

Afterwards the Church leaders sent an open letter to Prime Minister John Key called 'Together We Can'. They say the letter is a message of hope and calls on the government take a social, pragmatic approach to helping those affected by the economic crisis and not a purely economic one.

The NZCCSS is a grouping of faith based communities and social service organisations. It is one of the country's largest providers of social services and its members share an imperative to support families and communities hurting from the recession.

After the meeting with NZCCSS, Salvation Army Territorial Commander-elect Donald Bell said that the Church leaders decided the message they could best hold out to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand is that together we can look after each other.

Catholic Archbishop John Dew said the meeting with representatives of Christian social services agencies was about "mobilising our ideas and our commitment to ensure that in our approach we do not allow economic doom and gloom to overwhelm the strength that we know exists in our communities".

MCNZ president Jill van de Geer said the church leaders' concerns are not about policy debates or funding wish-lists.

"They are about taking practical actions that fit with the Prime Minister's call for creative ideas on more flexible laws. We recognise there are many areas of change that don't require government intervention."

Former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church Pamela Tankersley noted that faith communities are 'doers'.

"Every day their work is based in the realities of a society where there is already too much systemic hardship and poverty. As a society we cannot afford for things to get worse, when they could in fact be transformed for the better. As Churches we do not want to be known as the poverty sector, we want to be known as the hope sector," Pamela said.

Anglican Archbishop David Moxon described the growing recession as a "rallying call for us to do even more to utilise our comprehensive Church networks across the country, in ways that link with existing community resources, such as schools, and other non government organisations.

"Together we can be more responsible for taking stock of the good work that happens in our parishes and dioceses and promoting that even further," David said.

NZCCSS facilitator Ruby Duncan, of the Baptist Church, said actions raised at the meeting, such as greater coordination of publicity about the availability of services to meet growth in demand, will form a plan of action that will be known as 'Together We Can'.

Anglicans and Methodists to sign covenant on Wesley Day

By Terry Wall

Ecumenism is alive in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Holy Spirit continues to provide energy in response to the prayer in John's gospel "that they may be one" (John 17:21). Evidence of this is to be found in Union and Co-operating Parishes the length and breadth of the country.

In 2002 the General Synod of the Anglican Church resolved to invite the Methodist Church to enter conversations with a view to promoting the visible unity of the church. The Methodist Conference resolved to accept the invitation and each church appointed a team to participate in dialogue.

In the conversations we were reminded of all that our two churches have in common. There is the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, clergyman of the Church of England, who as evangelist developed a renewal movement within the Church. There is also his brother, Charles, whose hymns gave poetic expression to the proclamation of the love of God.

Within New Zealand the two churches have often had parallel and close relationships. There was co-operation between the two churches in missionary work among Maori in the years before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. In recent years both churches have embraced the bicultural journey in the context of the emerging multi-cultural society.

In the light of these conversations, the idea of the two churches entering into a covenant relationship commended itself. Covenant-making has deep roots in scripture, Methodists have renewed their covenant in Christ annually, and Maori and Pacific people have related to the idea of entering into a sacred covenant of commitment.

Both churches endorsed this approach and members of the dialogue undertook the theological work necessary before proceeding. Subsequently the Anglican General

Synod agreed to enter into the covenant relationship in May 2008 and the Methodist Conference agreed in November 2008.

It is held that within the commitment of a covenant relationship, the remaining theological issues that keep the churches separate can be addressed in a robust manner. These focus on the theology of ministry and the question of interchangeability of ministries. The covenant provides opportunities for combined worship, perhaps focused on commemorations of the witness of Charles and John Wesley, and eucharistic hospitality. While the remaining theological issues are discussed in dialogue, the covenant relationship will encourage joint action in evangelism and in the service of social justice.

A national worship event is planned, during which the Covenant will be signed by leaders of our two churches. This is to be held on Sunday May 24th – Wesley Day – at 2 p.m. at the Tongan Methodist Church Centre, Lotafala'ia, after which refreshments will be served at the Anglican Te Karaiti Te Pou Herenga Waka Church Centre, immediately opposite in Orly Avenue, Mangere Town Centre.

The signing of the covenant will mark a significant step forward in relationships between the two churches. It draws on the work for ecumenism of an earlier generation. It is consistent with the proposals of the 1996 International Anglican-Methodist Commission in its report Sharing in the Apostolic Communion.

The covenant is an expression of mission-shaped ecumenism that takes our context in this land seriously. We can celebrate it as a step along the way toward visible unity. It is a demonstration that 'the churches share a real but incomplete communion'. It is an expression of a deep resolve to continue the journey, to engage with the questions and share the vision of unity in diversity.



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The golden meme

To the editor

The new theologians tell us we have an ineffable close-knit bond with nature. Meanwhile, behavioural psychologists tell us about memes. A meme is an idea that spreads in a society and beyond.

In time, it comes to be an everyday belief or practice of the culture. Examples of memes are the Western handshake, the Maori hongi, or the Japanese bow; each is a learned custom of that group.

Our newly articulated ties with the ecology are on track to becoming a meme. If the idea inspires us to a sensible care for the environment and helps us to understand better our right place

in the universe, it will be a good meme.

For those people whose work or recreation is outside, often their lives are like a sacred vocation. However, the physical world can be mighty capricious and then would not be a good time to ask "how is your ineffable bond with nature today?" The answer might be too real for delicate ears.

The bible stories of natural happenings, which are loved and believed by some, are questioned by others. From whatever compass point we view it, surely everyone will agree, the most ineffable and amazing part of nature is humankind itself.

Margaret Whitwell, Te Puke

Way ahead for sidelined Church

To the editor,

When our Wesleyan missionaries came in the 19th century they came with the imperative command from Matthew: "Go ye into all the world and made disciples of all men." They had found Christ themselves through that challenge and why shouldn't it be their driving imperative in this new land?

Maori heard the message but also saw it's danger for them and their land. John Whitely was shot because, even as he moved amongst Maori, he was encouraging the desperate settlers in New Plymouth to take their land for God and Queen. If only the missionaries had been guided by another commandment John 13: 34. "I give you a new commandment that you love one another." Would not New Zealand's history have taken a different turn?

Today our Christian communities are sidelined down a dusty road while the majority go their busy ways. The world has changed over the last 100 years and the old message no

longer rings a bell. In today's society I believe we are challenged to change from the Great Commission to Jesus' great commandment, the one we repeat in the communion service.

Pause for a moment and consider how much courage it takes to come through the church doors wondering what kind of people we are. One such person looking for help brought strong cups of coffee to sip in the back seat for several Sundays until he felt at home. Sadly there are so many troubled and hurting people who do not know where to turn for help. When we get our act together we will have our hands full.

Today we no longer size people up as they come through the door to see if they fit our pattern nor do we check up on their theology. Surely now we do our best at showing loving care with no strings attached. We are not concerned we are no longer a power in our society but a healing leaven within the whole community.

Phil Taylor, Whangaparaoa

Not impressed with PCANZ

To the editor,

There are always several sides to a story, so I was prepared to view the story of the Rev Sherri Weinberg with scepticism. However, I soon realised that here was another occasion on which the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand was stifling someone who was

desperately trying to move in a progressive way.

I have been a member of the PCANZ for 30 years and slowly but surely I have become disillusioned with the national church to which I was once so proud to belong.

Linda Wilkins, Petone

In defence of Israel

To the editor,

May I comment on the front page of the February edition of Touchstone? Like David Zwartz, I believe peace in Israel must be restored but I ask: can it be a lasting one?

What is the fighting about? What is the history concerning this conflict? What is the source of all this hatred for Israel? Why is it so intense when it is obvious that Israel's hatred, if there is any, is far less intense? The Bible, of course, tells that it goes right back to Abraham's day and the conflict between Isaac and Ishmael.

How do you solve a problem in people's minds and hearts who have been indoctrinated over thousands of years with hatred for someone? Jesus may have broken the cycle of violence but very few have followed his example, as history has shown.

Maybe NZ Jews and Muslims desire peace in Palestine but it is obvious that someone wants to keep it going. Deliberately fomenting hatred, they do not want peace. They have a different agenda.

Javed complains that the bloody attacks by Israel were unjustified. Really? Does he mean the suicide bombings made by Muslim extremists, which none of their own people condemned? Or does he mean the unprovoked attacks by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria when they

poured across Israel's borders in 1967. Israel was outnumbered 80 to one but with God's help, they won that war.

During that war Israel was betrayed by Britain and America. They are cousins to Israel through Ephraim (Britain) and Manasseh (America) – Joseph of Egypt's two sons. The United Nations, which is supposed to stand for peace, has also betrayed Israel.

How many suicide attacks have been made on Arab towns and cities? None that I know of. Is Israel supposed to just stand there and be murdered? Come on! Would you just stand there?

Remember, God promised Abraham he would curse whosoever curses Abraham and his seed but bless those who bless them.

Hamas fighters are hiding among the civilian population, behind the skirts of women and young children, using old people as shields. They are cowards, hiding their faces behind masks so they will not be recognised and held responsible.

How close to becoming a curse is our complaint that singles out Israel as being the main offender when, in fact, they are only defending themselves from being murdered.

AK Nielsen, Upper Hutt



KITCHEN THEOLOGY Making it last

By Diana Roberts

For weeks the supermarket has been overflowing with displays of Easter eggs, cunningly placed at both ends of nearly every aisle: milk chocolate, dark, white; crème-filled, marshmallow; luxury praline or bargain hollow eggshells; plain or wrapped in rainbow foil; big bags of 'minis' and giant boxes with a single monster egg. So many goodies and so little time to enjoy them!

Easter comes and goes in such a rush. A small boy in our family was determined to make Easter last till Christmas, so he stashed away a supply of the chocolate delicacies in a box under his bed. As the months went by he resisted the temptation to have a nibble, and hauled them out in triumph at Christmas. The ants hadn't got them but the chocolate had lost its crackle, the creamy fillings had crystallised and the marshmallow had gone soggy and sticky.

If it's hard to keep chocolate eggs fresh. It's even harder to preserve the real thing. I remember a galvanised iron bucket that stood in the bottom of the kitchen safe when I was a child. When our chooks laid more eggs than we could use, Mum would carefully wash the surplus and place them in the murky depths of the slimy 'egg preserver' that

filled the bucket.

There they stayed until I was sent to delve into the sludge and retrieve three or four (only for baking, mind you). The bucket was dumped when we got a fridge, which kept everything clean and healthy for weeks. But eggs don't keep forever, even in a fridge. Eggs aren't designed to stay eggs; they're designed to produce chickens, to transform into new life.

How do we keep Easter alive? Good Friday and Easter services fill the churches and cathedrals which then empty out until Christmas, when the stale leftovers of faith are pulled out of the bottom drawer again. A folk tradition says that an egg tells the story of Jesus in the tomb: the hard shell represents the gravestone, the white, the wrappings of the shroud, and the golden yolk, the One within.

We are like eggs, too. Only if we grow our faith to maturity and break out of our shells will we fulfil God's life-giving purpose. John 12: 24 says "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Maybe that's another way of saying: You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Mission and worship in Lent

By Jill van de Geer

The season of Lent has not always been well observed in our Methodist Churches particularly the time from Ash Wednesday to the beginning of Holy week.

One of the things I greatly appreciated when working in both Catholic and Anglican communities was being given the opportunity to liturgically journey through Lent beginning with the symbolic Ash Wednesday service and then following a discipline of prayer and reflection culminating in the movement through Holy week to Easter Sunday.

Many of us will know people whose tradition for the Lenten period focuses on penitential prayer and fasting and we often engage in good natured ribbing about giving up chocolates, coffee or not taking the car to work. It is easy to dismiss these things as trivialities but underlying them are some very important theological challenges.

Lent is a time when we:

- place ourselves humbly before God – a time to own our inadequacies;
- place before God our needs, our fears, our failures and our hopes;
- respond afresh to God's presence in our lives and in our world;
- open ourselves to hear God in new ways and in ways that in our busyness, we may not have heard for a very long time

So Lent is a time when at a personal level we are called to repentance – to acknowledge that we have not always been good stewards of our lives and of this world.

Lent is also an opportunity to reflect as a church on our mission in our local communities, particularly as we move into a period of recession – a time when we will all be touched by the lives of those who are unemployed or struggling with mortgages and an ever increasing awareness that the political and commercial systems we have structured our lives by are fallible. The greedy and powerful have benefited but the pack of cards is crumbling and unfortunately those who have taken are not the ones who will bear the brunt of the consequences of such greed.

At Parish level we need to be aware of and be ready to meet whatever challenges might face us – and that may be different for each of our communities. As well as this, the Missions will be working a two pronged approach. They will still operate at the grass roots level with foodbanks, budget help, education, care of the elderly and children but they will also be active at a national and political level to ensure that change happens and we don't just repeat our mistakes all over again.

Also a group of Church leaders met last month with the NZ Christian Council of Social Services to discuss ways in which Government might be lobbied and encouraged to take positive action for the well being of all members of our community.

I would like to challenge all of us during the remaining days of the Lenten season, to take the Mission statement of our Church and reflect on at least one of the principles each day.

"Our Church's mission in Aotearoa/New Zealand is to reflect and proclaim the transforming love of God



as revealed in Jesus Christ and declared in the Scriptures. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve God in the world. The Treaty of Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing partnership and will guide how we undertake mission. In seeking to carry out our mission we will work according to these principles:

- To be a worshipping, praying and growing community, sharing and developing our faith, and working through its implications in our social context.
- To challenge people to commit to Christ and Christ's way.
- To be flexible, creative and open to God's spirit in a changing world and Church, so that the Church is relevant to people's needs.
- To release energy for mission rather than to absorb energy for maintenance.
- To foster networks and relationships with communities of faith having similar goals.
- To operate as a Church in ways that will enable the diversity of the people (e.g. all ages, all cultures, female and male) to participate fully in the whole life of the Church, especially decision-making and worship.
- To encourage each person to develop his/her full potential by accepting and nurturing each other, developing skills and providing resources, challenging and enabling for service in the Church and community.
- To become aware of, and challenged by, each other's cultures.
- To work for justice for any who are oppressed in Aotearoa/New Zealand, keeping in mind the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi. To share resources with the poor and disadvantaged in Aotearoa/New Zealand and beyond.
- To be peacemakers between people, and in the world.
- To listen for hurt and work for healing.
- To care for creation.

In prayerful reflection on each heading we can ask ourselves: How have I personally contributed to any meaningful and positive change? How have I seen the wider Connexional Church make a difference? Is the particular principle still important? What might I do in the future to make a difference?

Taking time to ponder in this way will allow us to link our Lenten journey with our personal mission and witness as well as formulating action which might be shared with others in our local church communities.

Easter – a Story of God's Li'oa

By Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta

The Tongan word li'oa literally means "to throw away (li) one's basket ('oa)." 'Oa is a basket made from young coconut leaves.

In the hierarchy of Tongan baskets, 'oa is amongst the lowest and has no real value; it is the 'handbag' of Tongan commoners (tu'a). Its main use is for collecting one's catch from the ocean (fua-'o-ngatai) or fruits from one's garden (fua-e-fonua).

To li (throw or give) one's 'oa means to offer everything one has, or to give away one's most precious possession for the sake of others. In a place where reciprocity is highly valued, people usually share with others what they bring from the sea or the garden. In some cases, one's family misses out. Here the 'oa is usually given together with what remains in it to show that there is nothing left; all has been given.

The term has earned an important place in the Tongan language as it encompasses important Tongan values such as 'ofa 'aufuat_ (unconditional love), feilaulau mo'ui (self-sacrifice), and mateaki (unreserved devotion). The idea is well-captured in two lines of a Tongan hymn (THB 612) composed by the great Methodist

missionary, the Rev Dr James E Moulton: Ko e 'Afifio kuo li'oa Kuo 'osi mai 'a Langi

Literally, 'God has given us the 'oa, the sky/heaven is empty.' In other words, the incarnation of God in Christ is the ultimate offering God made for humankind. This is aptly expressed in John 3:16:

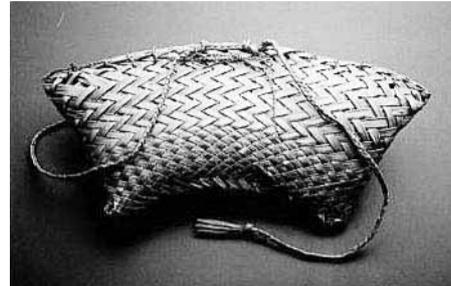
For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Easter – with all the commercialism involved – is about

one thing: God's li'oa! Through the person of Christ, God has 'emptied' the God-self for our sake, and thus makes it possible for God to dwell, suffer, die and rise again for us.

As we gather in different parts of the country to celebrate Easter, let us be ever mindful of how blessed we are to worship the loving God revealed to us in Christ, and ask ourselves the same question posed by one poet millennia ago: What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? (Ps 116:12).

Wishing you all a blessed and li'oa Easter!



Hymn for Easter

A Shirley Murray hymn written nearly 20 years but unpublished in New Zealand will appear in the forthcoming collection Hope is our Song, published by the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, with music by Colin Gibson.

NZ Hymnbook Trust director John Thornley suggests Shirley's hymn would serve well as an Easter prayer with the congregation repeating the last line.

Shirley says the hymn was written after the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra, in 1991. She was reflecting on the Worship Book prayers, one of which, from the Iona Community, especially appealed to her.

She says its words seemed to put into contrasting focus the beauty of the world and the arrogance of human behaviour.

"Its final part begins with the words I borrowed to open my hymn: 'Because you came among us and sat beside us...' It shows Jesus as the fully human person who does care to come and sit with us, listens to us, is ignored by us, heals us, but is hurt and finally violated by us, yet overcomes our inhumanity and hatred.

"I took and expanded some of these images, sharpening the contrast between our love of status and money, our violent natures and fight for power, set against the lifestyle of Jesus. A lifestyle of simplicity, laughter and self-giving, with an insistent mission to create peace at all costs."

Shirley says there is in the hymn a plea for forgiveness for what humanity keeps on doing. The final verses make connections between what we understand the Cross, resurrection and work of the Spirit to mean.

These words were first published as text only but they were immediately set by several composers, both here and overseas. The one chosen in Shirley's collection 'Faith Makes the Song' (2002) is by her Lutheran friend, Amanda Husberg, who lives in New York. She says each interpretation by a composer has brought different colourings to the words.

Because you came

*Because you came and sat beside us,
because you came and heard us speak,
and we ignored and we refused you,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Because you laughed and loved the child-like,
because you lived from day to day,
and we love status and steady money,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Because our peace was your agenda,
because you wept to see us war,
but we love power, and winning battles,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Because your cross compels an answer,
because your love absorbs our sin
and we are wounded because we wound you,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Because you came on Easter morning,
because you came at Pentecost,
and in the Spirit, we are forgiven,
we live to praise you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Words © Shirley Erena Murray

Charles Darwin 1809 - 1882

This year sees the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth. Darwin revolutionised our views of our world and ourselves with his scientific explanation of the life on earth.

The theory of evolution and the science of genetics have grown significantly since Darwin's day. But the debates surrounding them and their ethical implications have not disappeared.

The Church has had an ambivalent attitude toward Darwin. Today some with traditional views reject his ideas and hold to Biblical accounts of creation. Others reconcile their faith with scientific understandings.

This year some churches have held events to recognise the Charles Darwin. Here we present two essays prepared for those events.

Charles Darwin – Secular

By Keith Rowe

The centenary of Charles Darwin's birth is a chance for Christian congregations to recognise and celebrate the contribution he made to our understanding of life's origins and to the renewal of Christianity. It is an opportunity to welcome truth from wherever it comes.

The suggestion that there is an inevitable conflict between scientific descriptions of life and those found within the Bible is a tragic distortion. Science and religion are complementary pathways to truth, two attempts to grasp the inner meaning of life. Each discipline needs the wisdom of the other.

Charles Darwin is inescapably linked with the word 'evolution' – the view that all life, including human life, evolved from simpler forms over an incredibly long period. He was among the first to suggest life had evolved as a natural process without the interference of an all-powerful, controlling deity. From the beginning his views were controversial.

I invite you to identify with those who describe Darwin, despite his somewhat casual attitude toward organised religion, as a 'secular saint'. His research-based understanding of life has forced us to rethink and enrich our

understanding of the presence and purpose of God. That, surely, is saintly work.

Let me offer some reasons why we might honour Darwin as a secular saint.

Firstly, in speaking of life as an evolutionary adventure he affirmed that no static perfection is possible. Change, development, hopefully progress but often regression is woven into every part of nature. All else is changed once we accept that change is written into the deepest levels of reality. We belong to an evolving universe and we are part of a cosmic adventure.

Secondly, Darwin had a disciplined love of nature and explored how all of life is interconnected. Darwin's journey of discovery began as a boy and continued till his death. As the naturalist aboard the Royal Navy ship Beagle he visited South America, Tahiti, the Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Mauritius and South Africa. Wherever he went he studied the flora and fauna and amassed a significant collection of fossils and animal and plant life.

Back in London Darwin pored over his collection. He observed interconnections between species and how similar species differed depending on their geographic location. This is the heart of

Darwin's greatness. We are not short of collectors but what both the church and society still need are thinkers who see the interconnections that bind life together as a unity within a larger mystery.

In 1859 he published his great book 'The Origin of Species'. Since then gaps in his argument have been filled in and the work of palaeontologists and genetic scientists has confirmed the directions Darwin charted. Today evidence for the reality of biological evolution is overwhelming.

The standard theological texts of Darwin's time assumed that 'almighty God' had created each species exactly as they are in nature. Nature was said to resemble a giant watch made with such attention to detail that there must be a heavenly watchmaker. Darwin suggested that all species, including humanity, were the result of a long and natural process of biological evolution. There was no need for a divine watchmaker.

Clearly he contradicted the literal understanding of Genesis. While some theologians welcomed this, others claimed one must choose between Darwin and the Bible. His challenge to traditional interpretations of the Book of Genesis is further reason why we

Leprosy – it's time to think again

By Lala Gittoes, Pacific Leprosy Foundation

'I didn't think leprosy was still out there.' 'I haven't thought about leprosy for years.' 'I thought leprosy had been cured!'

These three statements represent the vast majority of peoples' ideas about leprosy today. And who can blame them? I thought the same way myself before I came to work for the Pacific Leprosy Foundation.

The reality of the situation is very different. More than 200,000 cases of leprosy are diagnosed in the world each year, and many more cases remain undiagnosed due to ignorance and fear. Leprosy is no longer a public health risk in most countries (i.e. there is less than one case of leprosy per 10,000 of population) but as the numbers decline, so does the awareness of the disease and the skills to diagnose and treat it.

What does remain, however, is the fear and stigma associated with leprosy – an attitude which dates back thousands of years to the time of the Old Testament.

Untreated, leprosy is still a horrific disease. It can cause major nerve damage to the hands, feet and face resulting in severe disabilities including blindness, loss of the use of hands, loss of sensation in hands and feet, and dropped foot. Sadly, through fear or ignorance, many people with leprosy do remain untreated long enough for nerve damage to be caused.

At the Pacific Leprosy Foundation, our mission is to ensure that knowledge and awareness of leprosy is not lost. In the Pacific Islands, it is essential that all health workers receive regular training about the diagnosis and treatment of leprosy.

Recently, in Kiribati, a short training programme resulted in a young man being referred to the Leprosy Unit. Tioti had been a regular patient at the local medical clinic for two years suffering from skin patches which were treated with a variety of creams – to no effect. Now he is taking multiple drug therapy which will cure his leprosy within a year but sadly, the delay has meant that he has suffered nerve damage and may well become disabled at some point in the future.

In Samoa, Tao was recently diagnosed with leprosy. His workmates and the family he lived with were horrified, and he was afraid to return to work or home. Once the local health worker visited his family and colleagues and learned the facts about leprosy – how it is totally curable and very hard to catch in the first place – they overcame their initial prejudice and were glad to see Tao again at work and home.

Please think again about leprosy, and help young people like Tioti and Tao to be diagnosed and cured of the disease by sending a donation to the Pacific Leprosy Foundation, Private Bag 4730, Christchurch 8140. lala.gittoes@leprosy.org.nz.

Help us make a difference around our Pacific

Everyone enjoys holidaying in the idyllic Pacific islands, but for many life there is far from enjoyable. Leprosy is still a public health concern and the Pacific Leprosy Foundation needs your help in eliminating this disease and continuing the care of patients with disabilities, or social and economic disadvantages due to leprosy. These people live in some of the most beautiful places on earth, but their life is often a painful struggle.

The work of the Pacific Leprosy Foundation is solely funded by donations and bequests. We need your help to continue this work and to achieve our ultimate goal of eradicating this debilitating disease.

Please help us if you can.

Pacific Leprosy Foundation,
Private Bag 4730, Christchurch 8140
Ph: 03 366 3685, Fax: 03 366 7771
admin@leprosy.org.nz



Our Saint Who Challenged The Church

should recognise Darwin as a secular saint. He helped free the church from slavish obedience to a literal understanding of the Biblical text. He thereby helped the church realise the essential life-giving meaning of texts that had been seriously misinterpreted by the church.

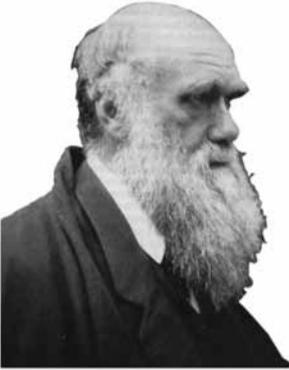
Darwin described the evolutionary process as a somewhat haphazard and painful journey. Nature may be beautiful to behold but it is also an arena marked by violence, extinction, and a struggle to survive. Only those able to adjust to the environment in which they exist endure. Here is a further reason why we might describe Darwin as a secular saint: he faced the unhappy truth about the shadow side of existence. We may not welcome it but it's the way things are and seems to be a precondition for the emergence of beauty, consciousness and community. Darwin observes that from famine and death, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are, being evolved. There is, he suggested, grandeur in this view of life.

Darwin's insights have caused Christians to rethink our understanding of the nature and presence of God. He is among those who helped the liberal church jettison the inherited view of God as a distant deity interfering with creation through miracles, coercive action and punishment. This has helped us to return to the more Biblical image of God as present within all of life.

God is within the evolutionary process, not outside like a director conducting from afar. There is purpose at the heart of creation represented by the constant invitation of God to choose love rather than violence,

Community of Saint Luke

Honouring
Charles Darwin,
born
12 February 1809



This sign commemorating Charles Darwin graced the front of Community of St Luke (St Luke's Presbyterian Church Remuera) earlier this year.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but rather those most responsive to change."

Charles Darwin

community rather than selfish existence, beauty rather than discord. God is pervasive, an energising and transforming presence, weaver of newness, like an artist bringing beauty to birth, luring creation toward fulfilment in community.

A final reason we should recognise Darwin as a secular saint is that he opened the door to an enhanced understanding of our human vocation – our high calling to share in the process of creation. Some complained

Darwin wanted us to believe we were descended from monkeys. How, they still argue, could we be related to monkeys yet still be made in the image of God?

But why should our kinship with the rest of the animal world be offensive? We are part of creation and we're linked with all other life. To describe humans as made in the image of God is to recognise we are conscious of the evolutionary adventure and by our actions help shape the future. The consciousness that is present throughout creation is intensified and embodied in humanity. We are literally co-creators with God.

This is the human vocation, and in Jesus we catch a glimpse of how we may participate creatively in shaping a future that reflect the beauty, justice and harmony that lie at the heart of the Christian dream.

For followers of Christ in the 21st century, the most important Biblical creation passages are not those that describe creation in the terms of a pre-scientific cosmology but those that envision a future marked by peace and invite us to participate in evolution's next steps.

These are the passages that speak of beating swords into ploughshares, peace between groups that differ, and communities learning how to gather in the marginalised and allow everyone to share in the riches of creation. Rather than describe our beginnings the Bible is a book and Christian theology is a discipline that point towards new futures, the next steps in the evolutionary adventure.

Darwinism and Modern "Biologism": An Alternative View

By Robert Miller, freelance researcher associated with Otago University

For much of the 20th century, science was dominated by physics, but biology now dominates. Immense technical progress in biology has thrown up profound ethical dilemmas.

My own work, on the theory of brain function, in relation to schizophrenia, brings me to know well the attitudes of other biologists. Increasingly I question these attitudes. I have serious worries about where biology is taking us. It is not the science itself that I reject, but rather the world view emerging in its wake.

In particular I worry about how human nature is reduced to something entirely mechanical. This debases human values, making the concept of 'a person' less real than the physical substance of which we are made. I also read in the history of science, to find how we reached our present views. This year we celebrate Charles Darwin, a real pioneer of biology. I would scarcely want to belittle his enormous achievements; but some of my views on Darwin's theory are a little subversive.

Modern science started in the 17th century with Francis Bacon, who first wrote of "scientific method". In the process he challenged 2000 years of scholarly tradition but he was not anti-religious. He wrote: "A little philosophy inclineth men's minds towards atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth men's minds about again to religion." Towards the end of that century, Isaac Newton produced his Principia, describing a theory of the whole universe, based on

laws of motion, and the principle of gravitation. The same laws applied 'everywhere and always'. His work was held together by strict monotheistic theology. In Newton's world view, God was the supreme power, not the laws of nature, which God could overrule at will.

This staggering achievement was seriously distorted in the next century, especially in France, during the 'Enlightenment'. French Enlightenment thinkers were anti-clerical. Newton's science was accepted, but not his (or anyone else's) theological framework. By the end of the century the French mathematician Laplace could thus propose the philosophy of 'determinism', namely that if one knew the position, velocity and direction of movement of every particle in the universe, and had sufficient computing power, all events, past and future, would be revealed, and determined with ultimate precision. However, this was only a 'thought experiment'. It is fundamentally impossible to verify Laplace's statement empirically. In human biology it would also mean that our sense of free will is no more than an illusion.

In the 19th century, buoyed by Laplace's confident assertion, scientists tried something never before attempted – they proposed scientific explanations of history. This started with Thomas Malthus's gloomy (but politically influential) prognostications about human population growth. It led to Karl Marx's formulations about socio-political history; and in this context Charles Darwin formulated the theory of evolution by natural selection.

In my view, thinking about Darwin's

theory has become seriously confused because it is presented as a package deal, whereas it includes two ideas which should be kept separate. First, there is the fact of evolution, namely that millions of years ago, the form of animals and plants was very different from present day forms, with evidence of gradual change. Given the fossil record, it is hard to doubt this, unless one tries to assert that the world is not millions of years old. The fact of evolution is straight descriptive natural history, and Darwin was supreme as a natural historian.

The second idea is the explanation of that fact by natural selection of randomly emerging variants in each species. That process is quite mechanical and the variants are random. Therefore evolution is purposeless. This second idea is then only partly scientific; it is also partly about theological issues.

In the mid-20th century, central European philosophers such as Karl Popper and Friedrich Hayek questioned the notion that science could explain history. Their early lives were scarred by the rise of dictatorships, founded on so-called scientific accounts of socio-political history. Popper also questioned the explanatory content of biological evolutionary theory.

I also raise such questions. Physical science involves the study of one variable at a time, with all others excluded, or well controlled. However, history is an endless succession of unique events, each one complex and uncontrolled, subject to many influences. In this situation, we cannot work out fundamental causal principles.

Of course we know on a small scale that selective breeding can change the

form of living things over the generations. However, in physics, we know that laws which apply on the everyday scale may break down when extrapolated to extreme conditions. Is it really acceptable to extrapolate from small changes during animal breeding, to the whole evolutionary history of life on earth, with no chance of empirical checking of past events?

For higher species (excepting perhaps micro-organism), are there any instances where we know in detail the events leading to the origin of a new species? And even if one found a few reasonably convincing examples, is the vast extrapolation to the whole of history really justified? With regard to the explanatory content of Darwin's theory, would it not be more honest simply to say 'I do not know'?

Science, like religion, depends on faith, or (if you like) on myths. Myths are to be evaluated not by their truth, but by what they can deliver to human societies pragmatically, as tested over the centuries. The explanatory content of Darwinism cannot be proven either true or false, as applied to the whole of life's history. In that sense it is a myth, a guiding assumption perhaps but not a testable scientific hypothesis.

Is it a pragmatically useful myth? Different people will give different answers here, but the natural selection principle was closely linked to the eugenics movements in the early 20th century; and today those dangerous ideas are by no means dead. In my view, to resolve those intractable ethical dilemmas raised by modern biology we need to rekindle the spirit of the real pioneers of science in the 17th century.



WALK FOR THE PLANET

Upon reaching its half-way point, Walk for the Planet (W4TP) turned out to be a successful effort that has generated lots of interest and discussion of environmental issues in the communities it has passed through.

It has also been marked by a high level of ecumenical cooperation with congregations of all denominational persuasions offering hospitality and support. Mayors and district councillors have been on hand in all major centres to greet the walkers when they have arrived.

W4TP coordinator Rev Mark Gibson says while there was a degree of central organisation to the walk, many of the details were worked out at the local level by regional

coordinators.

"This meant W4TP had much the same look and feel on its journey. We had the same support vehicles, the same T-shirts, and two walkers, Hugh Klein and Peter Love who are committed to the whole journey. The walk has also had a different flavour in each region."

"The ability to tap into local knowledge was a real strength. It meant we have been able to connect with some of the hopeful environmental projects underway in Southland, North Otago and Canterbury."

Mark says W4TP also revealed some

STEWART ISLAND

Te Punga O Te Waka a Maui/The Anchor Stone of Maui's canoe (Stewart Island) might be so far south that many Kiwis never go there but it was the right place to begin the Walk for the Planet (W4TP), say organisers. As the conservation capital of the nation it provided the spiritual anchorage and inspiration for the long journey north to the political capital.

W4TP coordinator Mark Gibson says Stewart Islanders have a passion for conservation and they are practical people so this is woven into their everyday lives. This was evident when local organisers chose to launch W4TP not with words but by making Shrove Tuesday pancakes and selling them to raise money for local conservation projects.

Mark says the launching ceremony for W4TP was a very special event. Methodist President Jill van De Geer joined the group to take part in it. Twenty people and a dog gathered at a golf course on Ringaringa Bay, the southernmost golf course in NZ. Locals opted to hold the ceremony there because they are engaged in a native replanting programme on the course.

Local coordinator Beverley Osborn, Jill and Mark led the opening ceremony with Jill speaking on behalf of the Methodist Church. The group sang 'Pick the Breeze Up' the official W4TP song written by Colin Gibson. A final blessing was offered in te reo Maori by local kaumatua Philip Smith.

From the golf course they walked the 2km to the wharf in Halfmoon Bay. At the wharf there were farewells and words of thanks. A spokesperson from the Stewart Island council and a Department of Conservation staff worker thanked the walkers for coming and expressed strong support for the objectives of W4TP.

SOUTHLAND

When W4TP walkers arrived in Bluff they were met at the wharf and taken to the local church for an Ash Wednesday service. The out of town walkers then went to the Maori Catholic Marae in Invercargill Te Tomairangi, where they were based for several days.

Over the next two days W4TP participants visited several environmental projects in the area, including the Bluff Hill-Motupuhe Environment Trust. This group is monitoring stoat traps so the native bird life returns to Bluff.

They also visited the South Coast Environment Centre in Riverton, which is developing community gardens including one at the local school where students will plant plots in the spring. There were also visits to a reserve where bellbirds and tui reside thanks to the efforts of a group of seniors who set traps there and a walk along the wetlands at Gambles.

The Walk itself got off the ground on Saturday, February 28th from Stirling Point near Bluff. An

enthusiastic band of about 25 walkers set out on the 30km walk. In Invercargill, the walkers were welcomed by kaumata Michael Skerritt, of Te Ao Marama Inc, which is Southland Maori's representative body in local government.

On Sunday the group joined in worship at the marae with the local Catholic whanau, then visited Southland W4TP coordinator Sister Judith Robinson's Korimako Dominican property to hear about the vision to set up a teaching and spirituality centre based on organic gardening.

They then went to All Saints Anglican Church to hear about flood control on the Waihopai River. A brisk walk along the Waihopai River was followed by an ecumenical service.

On Monday, March 1st W4TP was on the road to Edendale with the encouraging words of deputy mayor Neil Boniface who said the walk is not only a voice of concern for the environment but also a spiritual journey.

Weather during the next day's walk to Gore was beautiful but the pollution from passing cars and trucks reminded walkers of the peak oil crisis. In Gore the walkers enjoyed a potluck meal at the Catholic Church.

On Wednesday Gore mayor Tracy Hicks officially met with the walkers near the big fish in the town centre and saw them off on the 40 km journey to Clinton.

Judith Robinson says W4TP organizers in Southland have encouraged people to continue talking about the walk in the weeks and months ahead. Other activities held in Southland associated with

W4TP included more than 100 Southland seniors planting 100 native trees at Sherwood Forest QEII Bush Covenant, a walk along the beach from Riverton to Invercargill to count birds, and school initiatives to plant natives and pick up rubbish. The Invercargill Environment Centre had a window display about W4TP during February.

OTAGO

On March 5th the walkers left Clinton and crossed into Otago on their way to Balclutha where they were hosted and billeted by the Anglican Church community. W4TP was reported in The Leader, a Balclutha newspaper.

The next day was a long trek through the town of Milton, where



From the south to the north, walkers covered part of the long journey for W4TP. On the coast...

ST A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

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"In fact we have seen some of it. Some of the rivers and creeks we crossed in southland are in an appalling condition because of dairying. Some of them look like sewers.

"Another impact all the walkers comment on is the amount of rubbish on the sides of the roads. Between Bluff and Invercargill two of the walker attempted to pick up and bag the recyclable cans and bottles but they had to give up because there was just so much."

Mark says many people have commented on the ecumenical nature of the walk, saying they have not seen people from different local churches work so closely together for a long time.



and the lower beach pollution on Dunedin beaches as a result of better sewage treatment and disposal. Peter affirmed the W4TP initiative and said he had not seen people from so many different Churches together for a long time.

On Sunday evening a service at First Presbyterian Church was joined by four Muslim students from Otago University. The service focused on God as creator of our planet and our need to care more for the earth, sea and waters.

On Monday March 9th 15 W4TP walkers headed north from Dunedin. They had guided tour of Orokonui Eco-sanctuary, a 300 hectare area that includes native bush protected by a pest exclusion fence where native fish and birds are making a comeback.

The following morning the walkers headed to Karitane. They arrived at the Puketeraki marae in Karitane where they were warmly welcomed. Later they visited coastal land returned to Ngai Tahu.

On Wednesday the walk left Karitane marae for Palmerston where they were met by Rev Bobby Kusifila, the local Presbyterian minister.

The following morning the walk departed from Palmerston and went to Hampden, visting Moeraki Boulders along the way. On Friday, the walkers travelled from Hampden to Kakanui, where they visited a penguin colony.

A dozen people gathered outside the Kakanui Presbyterian Church for the W4TP march into Oamaru. The youngest was seven-year-old Sasha with her scooter.

A karakia was shared, before the walkers disembarked just before 9am. The route they took was along the coastal Beach Road away from Highway 1, which meant there were few cars and good conversation

Midway through the journey, walkers from Oamaru joined the procession. Upon their arrival in Oamaru they were greeted by Waitaki District Deputy Mayor Gary Kirsher, who commended the walkers for taking a stand for the planet.

Next stop was St Lukes Anglican Church where a number of Oamaru parishes served lunch. Then it was off to Oamaru's historic precinct, where someone on a penny-farthing guided them to the 'Stable' – the home of various modes of historic transport.

North Otago coordinator Rev Susan McCafferty then directed the group to the Oamaru Resource Recovery Park. There Waitaki Resource Recovery Trust manager Marion Shore explained the trust's philosophy which sees

everything, including 'waste', and indeed every person, as a resource. The park provides employment for 22 people, and opportunities for a further 15 volunteers. These are opportunities and second chances many of these people may not find elsewhere.

More than 80 percent of the waste, recycling, compost and reusable items which are brought to the park is recoverable, including plastics that would be deemed uneconomical by other recycling centres. The resource recovery park was so impressive, that the Cantabrians in the group felt that Christchurch could learn from it.

The next day the walkers headed from Oamaru to the Waitaki River. One of the walkers commented that before all the dams were built on the river it was a fine river. With increasing use of irrigation its flow has now dropped and now with a tunnel planned to divert more of its water into hydro generation, its flow could drop even more.

SOUTH CANTERBURY

On Monday 16th March South Canterbury coordinator Margaret Johnson met the walk at the Waitaki village hall on the south bank of the Waitaki River. Two police cars then escorted a single walker across the bridge while the others crossed in the W4TP van.

"Ann Te Maiharoa-Dodds welcomed the walk in Maori and gave thanks for the river and we said good bye to the North Otago people on the north side of the river. While standing talking at Glenavy a guy came up to us and introduced himself. He was working with the Baptist Missionary society in Bangladesh and was home for a while. He knew all about the W4TP and had been looking out for us," Margaret says.

On Tuesday morning the walk gathered at Keane park in the centre of Glenavy and planted two trees. After a blessing and singing the walk song it was on its way to Waimate.

Two of the walkers found edible mushrooms near the roadside so they were cooked up as part of lunch that day. The mayor of Waimate welcomed W4TP at a reception at 5pm and the ladies from Knox Presbyterian church provided drinks and nibbles.

The next day the walking recommenced with lunch in a farm shed north of Makikihi where the farmer told the group about his seed drying equipment and experiments in making canola seed oil at a standard to cook with. The walk reached St Andrews by evening.

Once in Timaru, W4TP participants visited to the district council chambers where we had a talk about the 3, 2, 1 zero waste management that is in place in Timaru. After morning tea it was out to visit the Otipua wetlands where a dedicated group have been planting and caring for the 20 acre area.

In the evening a small group of 14 were addressed by Mark Oldfield who is a member of Environment Canterbury. He spoke about the water usage, the rivers and the air pollution in South Canterbury.

the north: W4TP walkers assembled to launch the walk at Sterling Point, Bluff. Arriving in Invercargill. Cyclists
last leg into New Zealand. Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin and walkers sing the hymn Colin Gibson composed
last road into Oamaru. A visit to Otipua Wetlands near Timaru.

Keeping watch

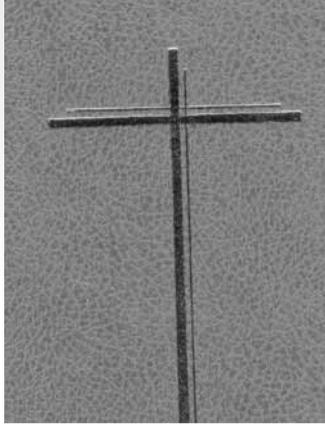
Remotes are a boon when watching television. One click to change channels and importantly, muting the sound during those remorseless ad invasions. Watching television can be relaxing. It's easy for attention to wander just as the weather forecast reaches our region.

Watching was different in Biblical times. It was a serious business. Lives were at risk if sentries on watchtowers or those at city gates failed to warn of unwelcome visitors. Losing sheep to wild animals or night raiders, or fruit from vineyards could create great hardship.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus directed his inner band of disciples to 'stay and keep watch' (Mark 14:34b). They were expected to be alert and awake on their watch.

As the gospels were written for his followers we attend to Jesus's words today. Keeping watch is about responsible seeing and hearing.

Of the well over 700 times that 'seeing' is mentioned in the New Testament the number of



times it does not refer to knowing and understanding can be counted on one hand.

These days, when the emphasis is on God's graciousness in Christ, our responsibility is heightened for being aware of what God is doing for our salvation. Is there a sounder basis for our faith than knowledge of God?

Should you, like me, be tempted to visualise the days leading up to Good Friday and Easter as like running your video or DVD on fastforward, then we could be exhibiting the thinness of our faith.

In the words of the prophet repeated several times in the Christian scriptures, 'It is possible for us to hear but not comprehend; see and not understand'.

In Peter's sandals, would our responses be any different from his denials? As followers of Jesus we are part of the gospel story not spectators!

Failure to look beneath the surface for meaning denies God and ourselves. Meanings uncovered deepen knowledge, renew our faith and bring us

new life. Strength to be stayers on our watch can follow. Significantly, women are the exemplars of such watching in the four gospels.

Jesus spoke of his death in terms of sacrifice. Sacrifice isn't about taking but giving life. That life is salvation.

The gospel according to John, and Paul in his letters develop these themes in terms of God's self-giving and forgiving sacrificial love. St. Paul writes that "as we have been graced by God in Christ so we are servants and co-workers with God to bring about reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5: 14 – 6:2).

Concerning the raising of Jesus; some of his first followers shared our doubts: read Matthew 28: 17 and John 20:25, 27; 21: 4. To others in the gospel story his resurrection seemed incredulous (Luke 24: 4, 11, 38).

Neville Clark writes that 'Belief in the early Christian community wasn't won easily; it was won against human expectation. False hopes had already been disappointed' (Luke 24:21).

Nevertheless testimonies endured, 'But God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all people but to us...' (Acts 10: 40f.).

A taste of the Reformation

CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart



An Ecumenical News International article announcing the making of a new chocolate in honour of Swiss reformer, John Calvin caught my eye. Calvin, the

protestant reformer, was born on 10 July, 1509, making this year the 500th anniversary of his birth. A year of events has been launched in Geneva, one of the centres of the protestant reformation, to celebrate this anniversary. Beyond Geneva, Reformed Christians around the world are also planning congresses, symposia and special exhibitions but only in Switzerland is someone making chocolate.

The particular character of Calvin's theology reflects his training as a lawyer and a theologian. Born in Noyon, close to Paris and raised in a devout Roman Catholic family, Calvin studied first at the University of Paris and then the University of Orleans where he experienced a sudden conversion in 1534.

Central to this change in his life were the beliefs that God spoke directly through the Scriptures to him and God's will must always be obeyed. This experience put him at odds with the Roman Catholic Church. Fearful for his life Calvin took refuge in Basel, Switzerland where he completed his most important work, Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536. He prefaced the Institutes with a letter to the French king that is recognised by many as one of the religious literary masterpieces of the Reformation age. It is both a forceful presentation and defense of the Reformed Protestant position.

Calvin's theology placed considerable emphasis on Christian character, although he insisted that Christians are saved 'to character not by character' that is, by grace not works. Underlying this important theological distinction was his doctrine of predestination. Since all good comes from God and human beings are unable to initiate or resist this conversion, it followed, Calvin reasoned, some are saved (elected) and others are lost (rejected).

It is absurd to inquire for a reason for this choice beyond the mystery of God's will, Calvin argued. In the Institutes, he

wrote, "We call predestination God's eternal decree.... For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others."

Almost 300 years later in 1739 John Wesley preached his famous sermon on Free Grace at Bristol. Following the sermon, a group of Calvinist-Methodists in the Bristol society circulated a letter charging Wesley "with resisting and perverting the truth as it is Jesus, by preaching against God's decree of predestination". This conflict led to a major split among the early Methodists between the Calvinists and the Methodists; Calvinists holding to what they called 'particular redemption' and the Methodists to what Wesley called 'universal redemption'. Predestination, argued Wesley, "made God out to be a liar". The grace of God was available to all, Wesley proclaimed, "Here, I fix my foot".

When I was at university I remember intense debates late into the night with other students. We usually began with sports, then we debated politics and finally we ended up discussing religion. Invariably the question of predestination would come

up and sooner or later someone would mention Calvin's name. Of course, we never resolved the contradictions inherent in Calvin's doctrine of predestination but we had a good time debating it. The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, once remarked, "None of us would like to have lived in Calvin's holy city (Geneva)".

Outside of Geneva in the small village of Vevey, a Swiss chocolatier has created special chocolate pralines, which he believes, captures the essence of Calvin. The pralines are slightly savoury to capture Calvin's reforming efforts and use 68 percent cocoa paste to represent Calvin's theology of the glory and perfection of God. Finally, since Calvin was not always an easy person, caramel made from Swiss cream has been added 'to represent in a discreet way Calvin's emphasis on love towards one's neighbours'. Being honoured in chocolate is quite an achievement!

The Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership and the University of Otago have announced a two day conference on Calvin's legacy on church and society in August.



Uniting
Congregations

CHILDREN IN THE GARDEN

We had a family barbecue at our house over summer to celebrate a wedding and, needless to say, there was a great crowd attending with a handful of younger children. I had spent quite a bit of time making sure that the garden was looking at its best. It was a newly developed section and I was keen to show off my hard labours.

I watched as the children ran all over the section totally oblivious to the boundaries between path and garden. I wasn't watching when they picked the apples of a young tree and used them as cricket balls, nor did I see them pick a whole lot of the unripened grapes and use them as marbles! At one stage I was

hoping they might have eaten the grapes and be suffering from stomach ache as penance for abusing my garden.

On reflection though, I began to have a better understanding of what had happened. These children had not been in a garden like mine before. They played in houses that had virtually no garden, and certainly not a vegetable patch or fruit trees.

I came to realise that these children simply did not know how to behave in a garden because it was outside their experience. The parents were apologetic, so much so that they said they would not bring their children back. My initial relief turned to sadness. After all, I had

worked on the garden so that people (children included) could enjoy it.

The analogy is clear. Today's children are not only unfamiliar with gardens, but also with churches. Young people don't know how to behave in church because it has not been part of their experience. Those that do come are sometimes met with condemning stares, or they are held close so that they cannot naturally explore the environment.

Equally, parents are reluctant to bring their children into a church setting for fear of what others might say or react to. This is especially so if their idea of church etiquette was formed over 20 years ago in Sunday School.

A garden – and a church – are built for people (and children!) to enjoy, to relax, to contemplate, to find themselves. How inviting is our garden/church? Does it look like a place where people (and children) can feel comfortable enough to play, make mistakes, try out new things? Or does it look protected, simply there to be admired from a safe distance and too holy to be trampled on?

I'm hoping the kids will come again. If they do, I'm planning to be there to show them the magic of my garden and to supervise them learning what a path is and how to tell when an apple is ripe. Blessings for the harvest season.

By Peter MacKenzie,
Executive Officer of UCANZ

Walk for the trees

When this issue of Touchstone was going to print, Walk for the Planet's arrival in Christchurch was set to coincide with events marking Earth Hour, the worldwide act of turning off power, cars and machinery. Christian World Service was slated to be part of the welcoming ceremony.

Throughout Walk for the Planet, CWS has proclaimed a strong climate change message: that the damage being done to Earth by developed countries is hurting those in the poorest countries the most.

In Nicaragua, for example, forests are being felled at an alarming rate. Most have been cleared for agriculture, cattle grazing, logging and by forest fires. Economic restructuring to pay foreign debts is said to contribute to the destruction of Nicaragua's forests. Between 1990 and 2005, Nicaragua lost 21 per cent of forest cover.

High unemployment has meant people with no regular income cut down trees to sell as firewood. Lack of education also contributes to the problem, as does lack of conservation awareness. Although the government blames local people for the wide spread de-forestation, commercial logging is a major cause.

In the mid 1990s, the government issued logging concessions that significantly increased forest degradation. Although the government issued a five-year logging ban in 1998, Nicaragua's forests continued to be logged illegally. Today, the government sells logging rights to big business, which export the timber to the United States, Canada and Jamaica.

The consequences of logging to Nicaragua include desertification, reduced water supplies, and greater exposure and damage to hurricanes, like Hurricane Mitch. Food production is threatened.

The Protestant Churches Council (Cepad) is helping to end non-commercial deforestation. It runs education campaigns in communities, churches and schools telling people not to cut down trees, and works with communities to replant and grow more trees. Cepad has the twin visions of improving the environment and of working with the poorest rural communities forgotten by government policies.

"People are not aware of the damage they are doing to their community. They aren't planting new trees so this will be a problem for their children and their children's children," Cepad says.

Cepad is just one of many CWS partners working to protect their local environments and give poor communities a chance to develop sustainable livelihoods and ways of living. These success stories are being shared during Walk 4 the Planet. Contact CWS for more information on how you can help. Phone 0800 74 73 72 or visit www.cws.org.nz.

Don't Corrupt Aid with politics says CWS

Christian World Service has called plans to absorb New Zealand's foreign aid back into Foreign Affairs "retrograde" and is backing a campaign to keep the focus of New Zealand's overseas aid on ending poverty.

The moves come in response to comments Foreign Minister Murray McCully made in March, stating that New Zealand's aid should change from 'poverty elimination' to a broader focus on economic development. He also indicated that NZAID, a semi-autonomous agency established in 2002 to manage New Zealand's official development assistance, should be reintegrated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He is proposing these changes without parliamentary scrutiny or public consultation.

The Don't Corrupt Aid campaign is a broad coalition of New Zealand's aid and development agencies that is calling for an open and consultative review of the proposal. CWS and is a member of Don't Corrupt Aid shares its concerns that aid becoming a tool of foreign policy, a shift from meeting the needs of the poorest people, and a loss of development skills.

CWS national director Pauline McKay has questioned the rationale of the move. She says NZAID has been functioning well. A 2005 report by the OECD, the international body that reviews aid programmes, concluded NZAID was a great success and recognised it as one of the world's best focused overseas aid programmes. A review by former National MP Marilyn Waring also rejected the idea

of merging NZAID back into the ministry.

"The missions of foreign affairs and aid are distinctly different," explains Pauline. "New Zealand's overseas aid programme asks governments in recipient countries what their needs are and we can help meet them. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade asks what New Zealand's needs are and how we can advance them."

Furthermore, NZAID is run by development professionals with different skills from career diplomats or other foreign affairs staff.

The proposed change of focus is of great concern. "Poverty elimination is a clear objective that benefits the poorest people and is in line with New Zealand's international obligations to meet the Millennium Development Goals," says Pauline. "A focus on economic development may prioritise funding of projects and infrastructure in the interest of those with the means to access trade and ignore the needs of poor people."

New Zealand's aid programme fulfils our commitment to being a good international citizen and establishing a peaceful and stable global community. "We can be very proud of our support for good development," says Pauline, "especially programmes funded through agencies like Christian World Service. These enable people to work their own way out of poverty and secure a sustainable future for their children."

CWS advocates continued 1:4

matching funds whatever the structure of New Zealand aid administration, so that donations to CWS is even more effective.

A decision from the Minister is pending. To support the campaign, visit www.cws.org.nz for a sample letter or email to PM John Key, Treasurer Bill English and Minister for Foreign Affairs Murray McCully. It is important to show public support for New Zealand's current aid programme, especially at a time of global economic crisis which will hit the poorest people hardest.



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Avondale Community Centre comes alive

From Page 1

Vai says the Parish is not fazed. They are taking things one step at a time and have taken things into their own hands. Through working bees, they have begun to upgrade the Rosebank Peninsula Church themselves, sawing wood, nailing down boards, painting walls and bringing food to replenish the workers.

On behalf of the Church Vai has established to community groups, the local council, and businesses. Some businesses have provided discounts for the work of the community centre and it has attracted the support of the Mormon Church's Helping Hands community service programme.

On Saturday, March 21st a contingent of 150 Helping Hands workers arrived at Avondale Union's community centre where they set to work building a fence, and restoring furniture and the interior of the Church.

Vai says Helping Hands found out about the centre through the city council. "They selected us as their local project because their work here not only benefited the church, it benefited the community."

The spirit of community is strong at Avondale Parish. The faded exterior of the church does not reflect the work that is going on inside. Despite limited resources, they have the determination to create a haven for those in need and empower those they touch.

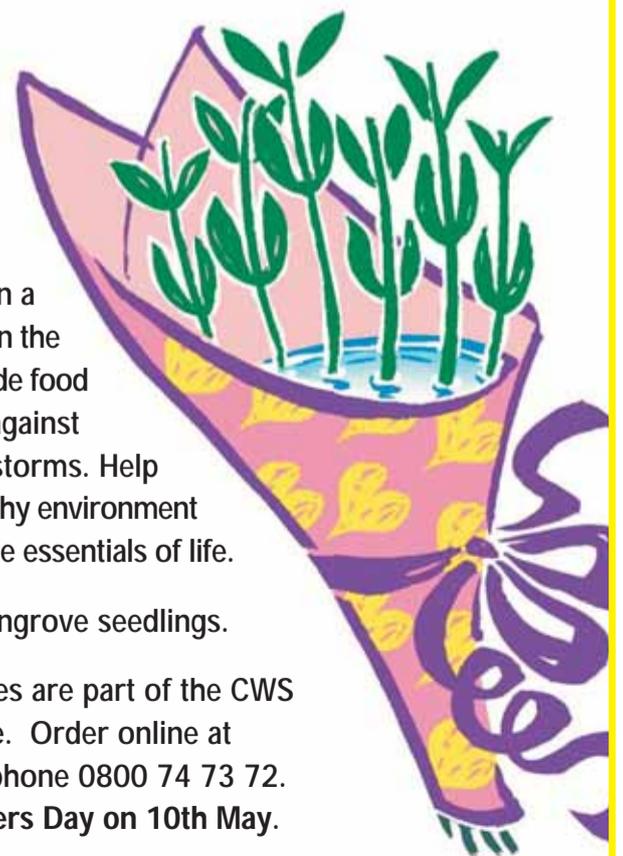
Not your ordinary bunch of flowers

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Mangrove seedlings may not look pretty in a vase, but for families in the Philippines they provide food and give protection against coastal erosion and storms. Help them restore the healthy environment they depend on for the essentials of life.

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Marvellous Mangroves are part of the CWS Just Gifts programme. Order online at www.cws.org.nz or phone 0800 74 73 72. Order now for Mothers Day on 10th May.



Think of a Just Gift and give a gift that builds a better future!

It's No Sin to Be Sixty: A Positive Look at the Third Age

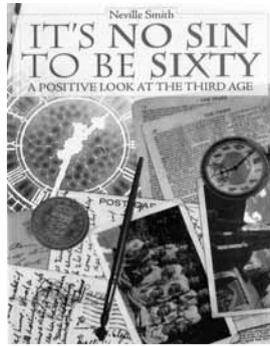
In his introduction Neville says "whether we handle our arrival in later life well or badly, positively or negatively, with acceptance or denial, we shall probably all have one thing in common: we shall do a lot of remembering, reminiscing, and reflection".

In this book 57 topics on aspects of ageing are discussed with warmth and sincerity from the remembering and reflecting of a retired Anglican priest of 50 years in ministry including many years as a hospital chaplain. Its OK to be me, Forgiving Ourselves, The body, A sense of humour, Aloneness, and Our own mortality, are some examples of these reflections.

'Vulnerability' is another, and I note throughout the book Neville Smith has an endearing willingness to be vulnerable in his honesty.

On religion and spirituality he says, "I have to confess that I came late to the realisation that religion and spirituality are two separate entities. I trained for the ministry at a time when it was assumed that a person's religious devotion was the same as their understanding of the Christian faith."

The section A Young Man's Gospel captured my



gospel. Neville explores the compromise between what one would like to do and what is possible.

The format of each topic is personal experience from a male perspective integrated with Biblical insights and concluding with a prayer. Frequent use of the collective 'we' and 'our' throughout the book could be seen as assumption but the insights brought will resonate with many older people.

attention. Neville talks of being haunted by the phrase in a poem The Evening Mass by Alex Smith – "Christ was never middle aged."

He uses three adjectives to characterise the young man's gospel: **urgent, uncompromising and unrelenting.** Later in life there is a major readjustment, and a re-focusing of thinking regarding understanding of the

There is discrepancy between the title and content. I do not consider those in their 60s will identify so well with this book. It is more likely to appeal to an older age group. For those within the church who have a traditional framework for their spiritual journey they will find comfort and reassurance but also challenges. Neville takes the reader on a journey through his own questions. Sometimes he wishes the questions would go away because answers are unclear and uncertain, if they exist at all.

This book has been written with the hope that the reader will reach a new understanding and experience of God and be affirmed in new ways of appreciating the opportunities and discoveries of the older years.

There is an honesty and integrity evident throughout the book. It is written from the heart by someone who is on a journey of growth and new discoveries and a youthful approach to life as he encounters the challenges. Neville Smith is ageing well. His wisdom and experience make this book a valuable contribution to changing attitudes about ageing.

Review copy supplied by Pleroma Christian Supplies.

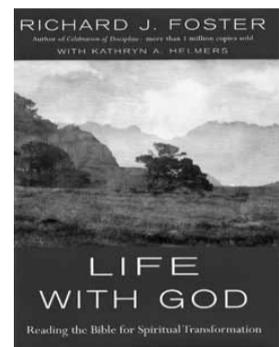
Neville Smith
Redemptorist Publishing, 2007, 195 pages
Reviewer: Anne Millar

Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation

Richard Foster first came to prominence when he published his best-selling book, Celebration of Discipline back in 1978. Currently he heads the intra-church movement Renovaré which is committed to spiritual formation and the renewal of the church. Persons interested in finding out more about Renovaré can go to the website: www.renovare.org.

The operative premise behind Foster's latest book is his claim that God superintended the writing of Scripture and as a consequence "Scripture is the most reliable guide for spiritual transformation". With this in mind Foster sets out to demonstrate how the Bible takes on new meaning for Christians when they realise that the Bible is about life-with-God.

Starting from this perspective Foster argues in his latest book that if we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Scripture, we can enter into a dynamic, pulsating life that not only transforms us but also takes us way beyond religious beliefs and behaviour. This is the hidden reservoir of life within the Scripture, a "being-with-God" life that gradually transforms us into the likeness and character of Jesus.



words we live a "with-God life".

A major problem of Bible study argues Foster, is that Christians misuse the Bible in that they study the Bible for information or knowledge alone or to find some formula to resolve a pressing need of the moment. Such approaches to the Bible, Foster believes, almost always leave us or someone else in charge.

Rather Christians need to read the Bible as a spiritual

Foster then identifies his three principles which can enable the transformed life to come into being: vision, intention and means. Following these principles, "will immerse one in a life that is penetrated by love, that responds to everything in the light of God's overriding governance for good, that has the power to overcome evil with Christlikeness". In other

discipline, that is, keeping in mind that "God is with us" in this process of discovery. Foster calls this the Immanuel Principle, which can enable us not only to see the life within the Bible but also "receive that life as our own". From there Foster sets out his framework for the disciplines of Bible study: vision, intention and means (of spiritual formation).

I find Foster's book essentially a repackaging of his original ideas in his first book, Celebration of Discipline. He seems to denigrate a critical study of the Bible in favour of the Bible as a kind of talisman that will open up for us what he calls life with God, as long as we follow his disciplines.

Maybe this works for some, but I must confess I am a bit suspicious of such approaches. I agree the Bible is a reliable guide, but only as long as I can also use my God-given reason and understanding. There are some things in the Bible, especially where God sounds more like a cruel despot than a loving Creator that I struggle to comprehend. But then, I trust that those who read this book and practice these disciplines will make up their own minds.

Review copy supplied by Epworth Books.

Richard J Foster
HarperOne, 2008, 224 pages
Reviewer: Jim Stuart

What Does a Progressive Christian Believe? A Guide for the Searching, the Open, and the Curious

In a contest for uninspiring titles, this book would be a finalist, but its name belies its contents. From the start, this short, easily read and accessibly argued volume captured my attention.

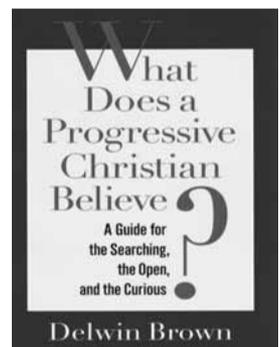
The author, American Delwin Brown describes in nine chapters the particular perspectives of an elastic grouping of Christians described as progressives'. Using Brown's definitions, I fit slap bang within this group.

Stating first what progressives are not – they are not the American Religious Right, Liberals, nor Conservatives – Brown then moves to a brief examination of the history of Christian theology, doctrine and tradition.

He considers the development of the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy, and dismisses it, before providing a fascinating explanation of 'authority'. Brown rejects the Roman view in favour of the Hebrew; that is, that we respect the past but embrace the present creatively and dynamically.

Other chapters deal with the progressive view of the nature of Jesus, of God, sin and salvation, church and politics. Do not be put off by these loaded theological terms, as Brown brings to each a fresh perspective.

Jesus is seen as God incarnate; that is, God fully with us in the human world, and with the whole of creation.



world they inhabit. Their 'dominion' of the world and its constituent, inter-locked parts is of the nature of servanthood, not exploitation. Thus they have a concern for each other, for their habitat, and for the sustainability of the planet.

The foundational principles of moral conduct are simple – love God and love your neighbour (in the widest possible sense, including the whole of the created world), as you love yourself. These rules are seen as flexible, not absolute

The nature of God is discussed, and the concept of God as cosmic monarch dismissed. The progressive God is synonymous with love, and is a dynamic, creative force whose presence inspires, heals and undergirds. God is not rationalised out of existence nor rendered redundant. For this alone, I feel encouraged.

Progressives believe that they are co-creators of the world they inhabit. Their 'dominion' of the world and its constituent, inter-locked parts is of the nature of servanthood, not exploitation. Thus they have a concern for each other, for their habitat, and for the sustainability of the planet.

and rigid, and reflective of a dynamic social and ethical order. Moral relativism is rejected, however, and progressives are encouraged to make appropriate moral judgements as required.

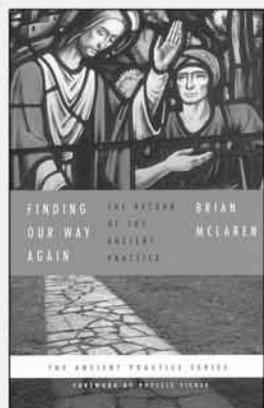
I found the chapters on sin (a failure to love properly, coupled with self-deception), and salvation particularly interesting. The latter is described in terms of healing and wholeness, and the quality of the life we live now. These are encompassed in the two metaphors, 'the reign of God' and 'eternal life.'

This book engrossed me more than other modern/liberal writers, who have left me with a profound sense of emptiness. Brown writes simply and intelligently, arguments are logically sequential, and for me it triumphs by building up, describing a faith structure that satisfies intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

Any reservations? Its simple style may appeal to the theological beginner rather than the learned practitioner, and some of the American references are irrelevant for us, but these are minor quibbles. Otherwise, if this is progressive Christianity, count me in!

Review copy supplied by Epworth Books.

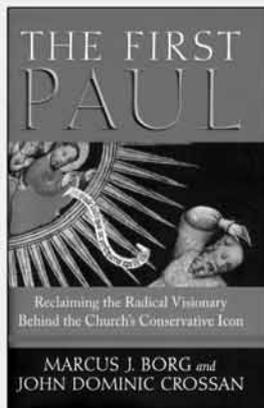
Delwin Brown,
Church Publishing Incorporated, 2008, 124 pgs
Reviewer: Jan Leman Christiansen



FINDING OUR WAY AGAIN

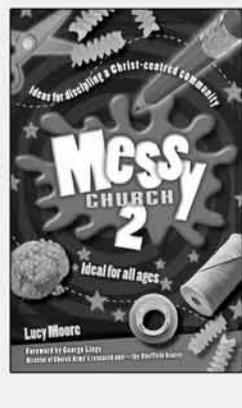
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CLINT EASTWOOD GRAN TORINO

In the downhill journey to Easter, a central figure is Caiphas, the Jewish high priest, who announces that it is better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish (John 11:50). Such understandings, of the power of sacrifice to ensure community transformation, are ingrained in Christian faith and make Gran Torino a gritty contemporary exploration of these themes in our world today.

Gran Torino is directed by Clint Eastwood, who also stars as the main character, Walt Kowalski, an embittered veteran of the Korean War. Aged 78, this is most likely Clint Eastwood's final acting appearance and it serves as a fitting dénouement to the vigilante violence made famous by Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" character.

Walt finds himself recently widowed, yet happily alienated from his family. From his front porch and down quiet Detroit suburban streets Walt growls over his changing neighbourhood and the growing presence of Hmong refugees. Like Walt, they too are struggling to cope with the evolving face of contemporary America, in which white picket fences serve as the battle lines for unresolved racism and unreconciled prejudice.

The silent star of this movie is Walt's pride and joy, his 1972 mint condition Gran Torino car. Walt's neighbour, Hmong teenager Thao Vang Lor (Bee Vang) is bullied into stealing the car in order to gain initiation into the local Hmong gang. Caught by Walt, an unlikely friendship develops, one that will change Walt, Thao and his neighbourhood for ever.

Central to Walt's growth is local Catholic priest, Father Janovich (Christopher Carley). It is a (surprisingly) positive portrayal of a religious leader. His awareness of local issues, his ability to network with other community groups and his willingness to be a peacemaker shine.

Initially rebuffed by Walt

("You are an overeducated 27-year-old virgin who likes to hold the hands of superstitious old ladies and promise them everlasting life.") Father Janovich remains pastorally persistent. His entry into the pub for a drink with Clint shows the power of entering the turf of another and the potential for good listening to become a prophetic challenge that can change a person's perception of life.

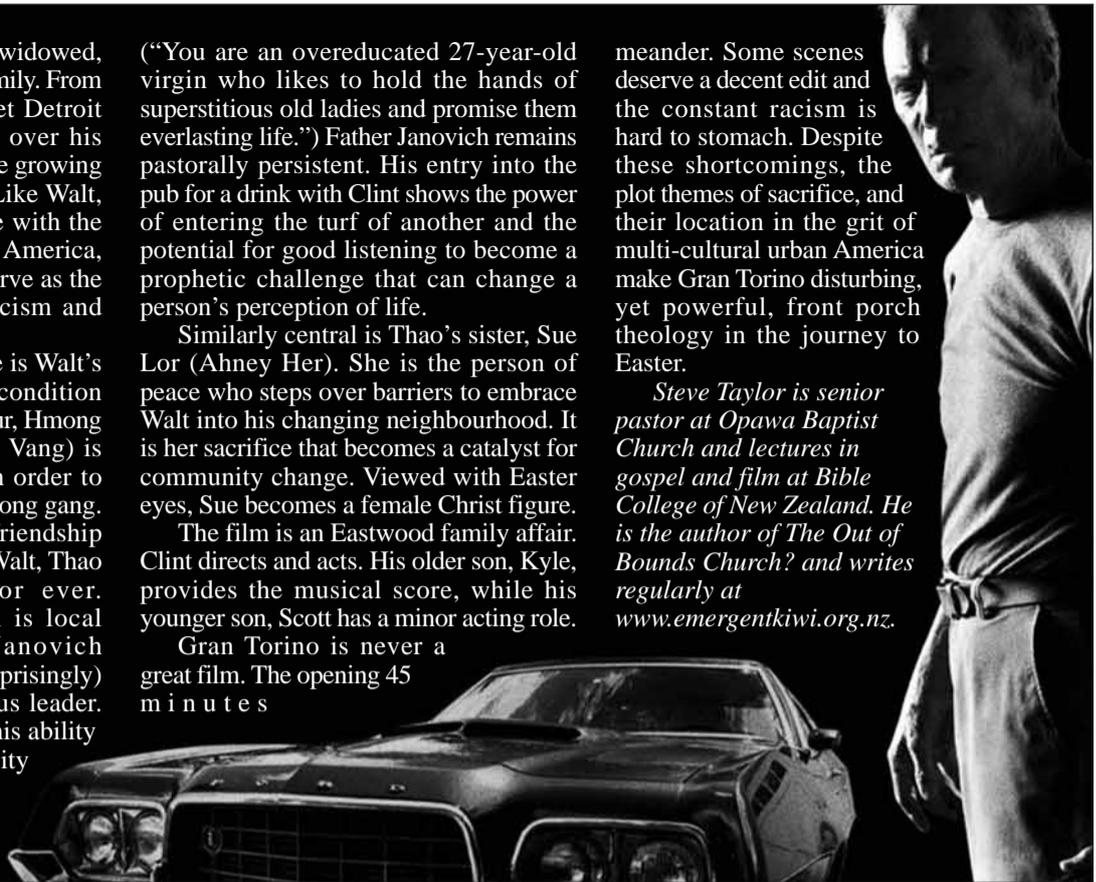
Similarly central is Thao's sister, Sue Lor (Ahney Her). She is the person of peace who steps over barriers to embrace Walt into his changing neighbourhood. It is her sacrifice that becomes a catalyst for community change. Viewed with Easter eyes, Sue becomes a female Christ figure.

The film is an Eastwood family affair. Clint directs and acts. His older son, Kyle, provides the musical score, while his younger son, Scott has a minor acting role.

Gran Torino is never a great film. The opening 45 minutes

meander. Some scenes deserve a decent edit and the constant racism is hard to stomach. Despite these shortcomings, the plot themes of sacrifice, and their location in the grit of multi-cultural urban America make Gran Torino disturbing, yet powerful, front porch theology in the journey to Easter.

Steve Taylor is senior pastor at Opawa Baptist Church and lectures in gospel and film at Bible College of New Zealand. He is the author of *The Out of Bounds Church?* and writes regularly at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.



EASTER

Easter is a 'Moveable Feast' tied to the full moon. It cannot come before March 22, or after April 25. This was decided by the Nicene Council in 325. Last year Easter came very early with Easter Sunday falling on March 23, this year we celebrate Easter on April 12th. During Lent and Easter the lectionary ('Mark' year B) dips into the Gospel of John.

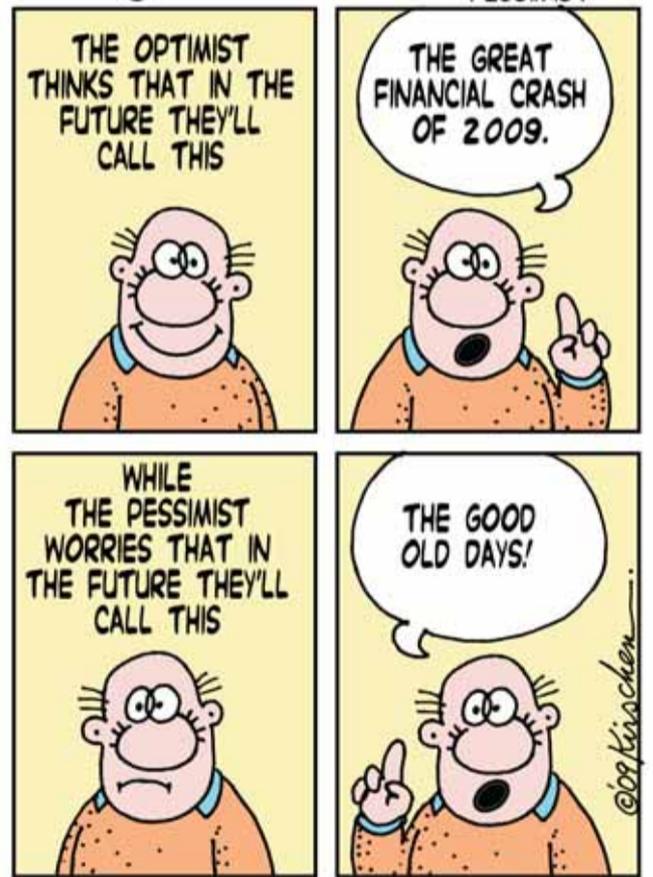
Bible Challenge

EASTER FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL

		RSV
They arrayed him in a ___ robe	_____ E	19:2
And the soldiers ___ a crown of thorns	___ A _____	19:2
But Jesus gave no	___ S _____	19:9
It read: Jesus of	_____ T _____	19:19
King of the	___ E _____	19:19
Pilate said, 'What I have written I have	___ R _____	19:22
When the soldiers had ___ Jesus	_____ F _____	19:23
They took his	___ R _____	19:23
They cast	___ O _____	19:24
Present at the cross: three women called	___ M _____	19:25
When ___ saw his mother	___ J _____	19:26
They put a ___ full of vinegar	___ O _____	19:29
'It is ___' and bowed his head	___ H _____	19:30
Not a ___ of him shall be broken	___ N _____	19:36
___ of Arimathea asked if he might take	___ S _____	19:38
And in the ___ a new tomb	___ G _____	19:40
Jesus said to her, '___ not hold me'	___ O _____	20:17
showed them his ___ and his side	___ S _____	20:20
He said to them, 'Receive the Holy	___ P _____	20:22
A fire with fish lying on it and	___ E _____	21:9
The final command: '___ me!'	___ L _____	21:22

Answers: purple, pitted, answer, Nazareth, Jews, written, crucify, garments, lots, Mary, Jesus, sponge, finished, bone, Joseph, garden, do, hands, Spirit, bread, follow

Dry Bones OPTIMIST PESSIMIST



DryBonesBlog.com

The Methodist Trust Association appreciates that the current world economic climate is a concerning one and that bad news abounds.

The Association regularly receives comment and cartoons representing a more light-hearted look at events which can help to lighten the gloom and keep things in perspective. The Association would like to share one of these cartoons each month with Touchstone readers.

Insurance Fund Refund on its way

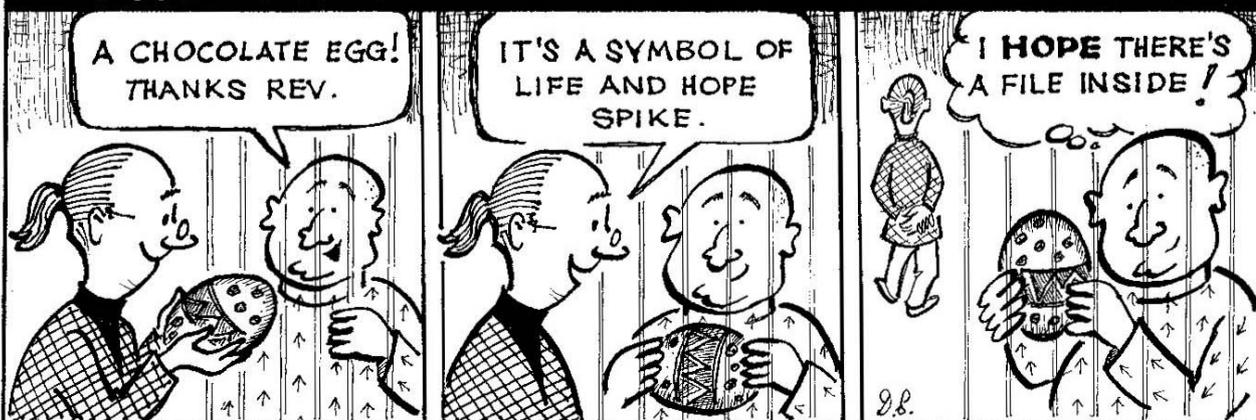
The Insurance Fund announced at Conference that, to recognise the Church's excellent efforts in managing its claims, it would refund the last two months premium for the year to 30 April 2009.

All parishes and groups with insurance through the Board of Administration Insurance Fund as at 1 March 2009 will shortly receive refunds direct into their Parish bank accounts.

Details of each payment will be sent to Parish Treasurers.

The REV...

by Dale Sweeney



Young People

A didgeridoo, the haka and a kombi-van

Earlier this year a few of our young people attended the NCYC09 youth conference in Australia. Recently those who attended had a follow-up debrief. Afterwards I was fortunate enough to correspond with our Tauivi Youth Co-ordinator TeRito Peyroux on some highlights of their trip.

TeRito says while opinions varied on the highlights of the event, a highpoint for most of the NCYC09 participants was on the day of 'Submerge'. Participants were assigned to different groups, with the intention of going into the wider community as living seeds, taking the Good News with them through action, service, protest and prayer.

The different 'submersions' that were on offer ranged from visiting the missions, to cleaning up community centres, to creatively demonstrating in the Melbourne CBD on issues such as human trafficking and unfair trade, to travelling around the outskirts of Melbourne in a Kombi van doing random acts of kindness. Some spent the day as refugees in simulated asylum scenarios, and others planted trees at local rest homes, to name but a few. "Another highlight was when we performed during one of the festival times in the

programme. We were very blessed to have two members of our delegation teach us two different songs. One was in Maori, English and Sign Language and the other was sung by a famous singing duo of brothers, who are also NZ Methodists," TeRito says.

"While we weren't a choir nor a group of professional entertainers, to be able to really feel the songs we were singing and then feel the wairua while sharing at the festival with a haka, was an experience I don't think any of us could forget."

The worship times each evening were another highlight. At one evening worship, the whole convention was part of the ordination service of a key member of the NCYC09 organising committee.

Attending a service like this was a first time experience for many of the participants, and it naturally called for an even stronger sense of honour to have been a part of such a special celebration.

TeRito says another worship highlight was sharing communion on the final evening of NCYC09. The elements of bread and wine were replaced with billy tea and damper, and the usual contemplative background music was

replaced with the very poignant sound of the didgeridoo.

"As a young delegation, we were mindful of the fact that we represented our church, our families, our own cultural backgrounds, as well as the indigenous culture of our country. This was one of the very few times that we could make and feel a connection with the indigenous context that we were visiting. Although not much was said under the sound of the lone didgeridoo, much was felt and reflected on afterwards."

Thank you TeRito for sharing your experiences. One can only wish to have been part of this empowering conference.

Remember if you have any stories, outreach



Delegates to NCYC09 say highlights included worship, cultural exchanges, and the chance to do random acts of kindness.

programmes, conferences or issues you'd like to send out to the wider church and community please email me on mdrobertson08@gmail.com or text/call me on 021 734 694 and I'll organise something with you.

Have a blessed month as we remember our Passover, Jesus Christ – His death, resurrection and our new life in Him.

Kidz Korna!

Welcome to this months Kidz Korna

This month we celebrate two very special occasions. First is Easter, which I think is an even more important Christian festival than Christmas. Why do I believe this? Because at Easter we remember that Jesus died for us, and no-one can make a greater sacrifice than giving their life to save others.

Secondly, on April 25th we celebrate Anzac Day. On this day we especially remember all the soldiers who sacrificed their lives in wars so that our country could be free.

Each of these days has a symbol: The cross reminds us of Easter because Jesus was crucified. A red poppy reminds us of the soldiers who died because the fields in Flanders, where battles were fought were later covered in red poppies. People thought that it was a reminder of the blood shed by the soldiers

An Easter Egg hunt with a difference

For this you will need 12 plastic eggs, numbered 1 to 12. You can buy these in a number of shops. For the symbols that go inside you can either make them or draw a picture on a small piece of card (12 cards, also numbered 1 to 12).

Put the symbols inside the eggs. You could also put a small Easter egg inside, as well.

Hide the eggs.

Pin the cards with the meaning of the symbols written on them around the church or children's room. The idea is to find an egg and match it with the correct meaning.

Symbol	Meaning
Donkey	The entry into Jerusalem.
Cup and bread	The last supper.
Silver coins	Judas betrays Jesus.
Rooster	Peter denies Jesus.
Thorns	A crown of thorns was put on Jesus' head.
Nail	Jesus was nailed to the cross.
Cross	Jesus was crucified between two robbers.
Sponge on a stick.	Jesus was thirsty and a soldier gave Him a drink.
Cloth	Jesus was wrapped in cloth and taken to the tomb.
Stone	A stone was placed over the entrance to the tomb
Torn black cloth	The temple veil is ripped in two.
Empty egg	Jesus is risen from the dead.



BOOK REVIEW

The Adoration of Jenna Fox

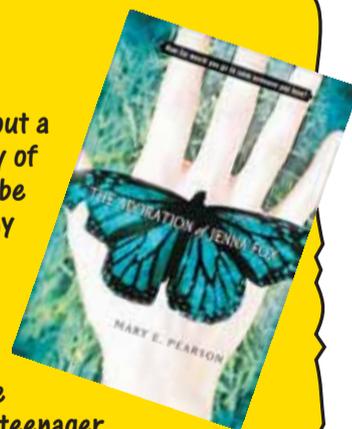
Author- Mary E Pearson
Allen & Unwin, 2008, 251 pages
Reviewer: Shannon Taylor

Set in the near future, the Adoration of Jenna Fox is about a girl who wakes up from a year-long coma with no memory of who she is, or anything else about herself. Jenna should be happy, but what are her parents hiding from her? And why is Lily, her Nana, so cold towards her?

This book is an emotional journey. It outlines Jenna's highs and lows, her relationship with her family and others around her, and her slow recollections of her past life. The themes and underlying message of this book provoke a lot of thought. Jenna has to try to understand things no teenager should ever have to think about. I like it but it isn't a book to read when you just want to have a break from having to think. This book was in the Young Adults section, and I agree with the placement. It is also not really a boy's book, though that is not a firm rule.

There are some bold ideas that need thinking about in the light of what the Bible has to say.

Overall, I enjoyed this book because it provokes a lot of thought and the style is unique.



Competition results

The winner of the Add It Up Competition was Tristan Anderson from Cambridge. Tristan and his family have just started worshipping at St John's in Hamilton East Congratulations. Tristan your prize is on its way. Sadly, there were no entries for last months competition and I have decided to leave competitions until the winter months. That means that the next one will be in the July Touchstone. We will still have a Puzzle Corner each month.



At the Rushton family reunion: Mark Harris, Jill van de Geer, and Percy Rushton.

Rushton family reunites

A gathering of 150 of his descendents and their families gathered at Tatuani, Morrinsville, 16-18 January 09, to celebrate the centennial of the arrival of Percy Rushton in New Zealand.

Highlights of the week-end were three re-enactments. The first was of his arrival at Annandale, near Morrinsville, where he was welcomed by William Shepherd Allen, a Methodist lay preacher who soon had Percy preaching throughout the extensive Upper Thames Circuit.

The second was of Percy's pioneer farming days at Tatuani where he pitched a borrowed tent in virgin bush, and, in partnership with his brother Wilfrid and neighbour Bill Woodley, supplemented his income by a contract to build a road from the railway to the farm using a horse and dray.

The third was of Percy meeting and falling in love with Ella Perrott at a church picnic – a meeting that led to the establishment of a family of nine girls and two boys, and eventually 163 descendants.

Another highlight was the Sunday morning church service. Because of the deep involvement of the family in Methodism, it seemed appropriate to have MCNZ president Rev Jill van de Geer participating, along with Rev Percy Rushton who presided and preached, and Mark Harris, a grandson training for ministry in the Anglican Church in England, who spoke to the children.

Pearl and David Sealey led the memorial section of the service, remembering the 16 members who had died – Ella Rushton, Percy Rushton, Warren Robertson, Eric Clement, Arthur Clement, Eunice Clement, Graham Bell, Grace Bell, Irvine Curel, Cliff Rushton, Paul Watkins, Nikki Freeman, Harold Watkins, Ella Watkins, Allen Hall, and May Curel. The service included a Heritage Thanksgiving offering of nearly \$10,000 which was given to the Cancer Society.

Two nonagenarians present were Sheila Rushton (Percy's second wife) now 95, who spoke to the gathering, and Zilla Clement aged 91, whose memory of the early days went back further than anyone else.



More than 100 people gathered to celebrate the centennial of Fairburn Community Church in January.

Ton at the crease for Fairburn Community Church

After months of preparation members of the Fairburn Community Church in Northland welcomed upwards of 110 guests to their centennial celebration on the 11th January 2009.

The day began with a 10am church service. Guest speaker, Pastor Graeme Baucke challenged the gathered with the theme 'Journeys'.

Everyone gathered at the Fairburn Hall for the History slide show, narration was given by former and present church members. Ruth Foster provided valuable memories and records, and Murray Foster provided research and material. This work was evident in the PowerPoint and pictorial displays.

Dawn Pearce made and iced the cake, featuring the Church. It was cut by Grace Williams, who along with her husband Rhys and other family members, helped and encouraged the Fairburn

congregation over many years.

Special guests were Rev Ted Grounds, Methodist Minister 1947-52 and Rev Ted Baker with wife Grace (a member of the local Parker family) who participated in the 60 year celebration in 1969.

Guests attended from as far away as Wellington. The 'Meet and Greet' during lunch was a time to catch up with old friends, relations and meet new folk.

The members of the congregation give thanks to God for His faithfulness down through these 100 years to the Church in Fairburn, a place where the name of Jesus is still lifted up. And thanks to those who worked so hard to make this a most memorable and successful day. May we journey forward with confidence.

Tauranga celebrates 50 years

Half a century is worth celebrating! The congregation at Wesley, Tauranga Methodist Parish, is looking forward to celebrating fifty years on its present site at 13th Ave.

In 1959, the move from its previous 1st Ave site seemed like a shift to the edge of town, but now it is centrally located and the city sprawls many kilometres in all directions.

On Sunday 19 April 2009, at the 9.30am service, Wesley will recognise the 50 years since the first communion held there.

There have been significant milestones, over the decades such as opening additional parts to the complex and the dedication of the restored church

following the fire of 1980.

There are also many years of ministry to celebrate: worship enriched by music and thoughtful preaching; children's and youth ministry through Boys' and Girls' Brigades and Sunday and social activities; a lively Women's Fellowship; a strong diaconal link with the Alzheimer's Society and support of Relationship Services.

Wesley extends a warm invitation to join us for this day of celebration. Following the service, there will be a shared lunch, and anyone with any photos or memorabilia to display may like to get in touch with the Parish Office on 07-578-8493, or email tauranga.methodist@xtra.co.nz.

In the footsteps of a remarkable medical missionary

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Jill Week

Among the many taonga, or treasures, held in the Auckland Archives are the photographs deposited with us over the years. Especially interesting are the ones from those who worked in the Pacific missions.

Many missionaries must have included cameras in their suitcases and, when possible, taken photographs of their new surroundings and the people they had come to serve. Despite the conditions, the climate, and sometimes less than professional results, these photos provide something special to those of us in later years who view them. One particular album from Jean Butler (nee Dalziel) has some pages devoted to a bridal party in the Solomon Islands in 1928.

In the years preceding this date, Edward Sayers, a young medical student who attended the Methodist Church in Sydenham, Christchurch, became aware of a strong desire to be a medical missionary. New Zealand had recently become responsible for the Methodist Mission's work in the Pacific, particularly the Solomon Islands. Church congregations were told of the need for health services, doctors and nurses and a new Mission Board was formed.

The Sydenham Church supported Edward's aims and there was practical assistance from the women's groups for the work of the Missions. All this made it possible for the young student to continue his studies at Otago Medical School. He graduated there and in Britain, qualifying for the Diploma of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. Edward associated with a Dr Manson-Bahn, a distinguished specialist in this field, and collaborated with him in several pieces of research.

Edward worked his passage back to New Zealand as a ship's doctor, arriving in Auckland in early June 1927. He visited several Young Men's Bible Classes



The Sayers bridal party and guests, Roviana, Solomon Islands, March 1928, with college, school and dispensary in background.

in Christchurch who had helped finance his appointment and regarded him as their own missionary. On 12 June 1927 he was commissioned to his Missionary service by the president of the Methodist Conference, Rev Dr Harry Ranston.

In the Solomons, the work load was heavy and some expressed concern at the possible effects on Edward's own health but he was regarded highly everywhere. It was said "he touches and treats the natives as though he loves them".

The following year his fiancée, Jane Lumsden Grove, came from New Zealand and they were married in March 1928 at Roviana. Photographs were taken of the bridal group for Jean Dalziel's album. They were to have six children.

Records of Edward's seven years in the Solomons indicate his great concern for improving the health and

lives of the Solomon Islanders, and he published many papers. He experimented with new anti-malarial drugs, and in 1940, he received the Cilento Medal from the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra for his pioneer research on malaria.

In 1934, retrenchment due to the worldwide depression meant that Edward was recalled, much to the disappointment of the Solomon Islanders. The work that had been so well started with training of local staff (begun by Lilian Berry) did mean a better service when eventually it was possible to appoint more doctors to the Solomons.

Edward returned to Auckland as a general practitioner. At the start of World War II he served as medical adviser on tropical medicine in North Africa and also in the Greek campaign. He went back to the Pacific in 1942 to serve in New Caledonia and was eventually put in charge of the hospital there.

His knowledge and advice on tropical diseases were invaluable to both the New Zealand and US forces. He gained the US Legion of Merit in 1944. He returned to Auckland becoming one of the city's leading physicians and served in many different prestigious ways as his achievements continued.

He gained many national and international distinctions and in 1958 he was appointed dean of the Otago Medical School. Though he retired in 1967, he continued to work and serve, devoting the rest of his life to promoting medicine and medical issues in New Zealand.

He divorced his wife Jane in 1971 and later married Patricia Coleman. They had four daughters. Sir Edward Sayers died on 11 May 1985.

Ko e Talatalaifale 'a e Faifekau Sea Rev Setaita Tokilupe T. Kinahoi Veikune

KE TAU TAHA MU'A 'IA KALAISI – Matiu 17: 20-26

“Ko 'eku kole ke nau taha pe 'akinautolu kotoa pe; hangee 'oku ke 'iate au, 'ala Tamai, mo au 'iate koe, ke pehe foki 'enau 'iate kitaua: koe'uhi a ke tui a mamani na'e fekau mai au 'e ho'o 'Afio.” Matiu 17: 21

'Alaa si'oku kainga 'ofeina. 'Oku ou tuku Kololia ki he 'Otua pea fakafeta'i lahi 'a hoku laumalie 'i he faingamalie mo e founga ko eni 'oku malava ai ke u faitohi atu kiate kimoutolu hono kotoa si'eku fanau 'i he 'Eiki.

'Oku te fiefia 'i he 'Eiki ke tali 'a hoku Ui meiate IA, 'aia kuo fakafou mai 'i hono fili kita 'e homou kau fakafongia ki he Vahefonua pea tu'utu'uni ai 'e he Konifelenisi ke u hoko ko e Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonua Tonga 'O 'Aotearoa. 'Oku ou koloa'ia ke tali 'a hoku tapuaki ko e fa'ee fakalaumalie kia kimoutolu hono kotoa pe 'a hoku kainga Tonga 'i he Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila, 'i ha tapa pe 'o Aotealoo ni.

Ko e Akonaki faka fa'ee 'oku ou fai atu ni kuo u fokotu'u ia koe kaveinga, kapasa mo e huluhulu ki he 'etau ngaue kotoa pe, 'a 'etau Fononga faka – Pilikimi 'oku fai, kae'uma'a 'a 'etau nofo ko e famili 'i he Siasi, 'io 'a 'etau lotu mo e hu ki hotau 'Eiki Huhu'i, 'a e 'Otua Mafimafi.

Kainga ko e Siate Folau 'oku ou tuku atu ni ko e KOLE. 'aia 'oku ou fakaongo atu mei he 'etau Vahefonua, 'a e KOLE tofu pe koia na'e fai 'e hotau 'Eiki ko Sisu Kalaisi, 'i he 'ene lotu na'e fai ki he 'Otua ko 'ene Tamai 'oku hiki 'e Matiu, 'a e veesi kuo to'o mei he Kupu'i Lotu ko e huluhulu 'o e Kaveinga mo e

mu'aki Misiona 'o 'etau ngaue mo e lotu 'i he ta'u 'e 3 ko eni kuo tau kamata ni.

Na'a ku fakamo'oni ki he Mana ka ko e tapuaki lahi 'i hono ngaue' 'o e kaveinga ni 'i he fuofua fakatahataha 'o e Fakataha faka-Vahefonua kuo te Sea ai 'i Pepueli 'o e ta'u nii. Na'e kamata pe mei he Polokalama Ako ma'a e kau Faifekau mo e kau malanga kuo fakamafai'i ki hono fai 'o e ongo sakalamenti toputapu. Na'e hokohoko pehee aipe ki he ngaahi fakataha'anga kotoa pe, 'a e ngaahi ma'unga kelesi mo e feohi 'i he ngaah tepile 'ilo. Na'a te fakamo'oni ki he leveleva 'a e laumalie faka'ofa'ofa 'o e TAHA mo e MELINO, 'io, 'i he funga pe 'o hotau ngaahi faikehekehe kotoa pe. Fakafeta'i ki he 'Eiki 'Otua, he 'iate IA 'oku malava 'a e ta'emalavaa, pea ke 'O'ona pe 'a e Langilangi mo e Kololia.

Kuo u fokotu'u ha ongo Komiti makehe 'e ua ke tokoni ki hono fakahoko hoku fatongia. 'Oku 'iai 'a e Komiti Fakafaifekausea 'aia ko e kau ma'u lakanga 'o e Vahefonua, ko au, Sekelitali (T.Finau), mo e Sekelitali Pa'anga (P.Taumoepeau); pea mo'eku Faifekau Fale'i ko Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta. Ko e Komiti hono uaa ko e Komiti Fakafaifekaupule, 'aia ko au ia mo e kau Faifekaupule 'o e ngaahi Vahengangaue Tonga; Rev Taufua Filiia, Rev Kepu Moa mo Rev 'Inoke

Siulangapo.

Ko e kamataa pee e kuo tau maataa, ka 'oku ou kole atu ke tau takitaha foki ko eni ki hotau ngaahi taaputa 'o hokohoko atu mo e kotoa 'o hotau ngaahi kaingaa 'a hono ngaue'i, pea mo mo'ui 'aki pea ke tau faka'utumauku 'i hono lotua 'a 'etau kaveinga, ka ko 'etau kapasa mo e mu'aki misiona. Ko 'eku lotuu mo e faka'anaua 'a hoku laumalie, 'oku ou fakaongo atu ai e Visone mo e taumu'a 'a 'etau Vahefonua Tongaa, ke kamata ke u ongo na mu'a mei he tapa kotoa pe 'o Aotealoo 'i he Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Silaa, faaitaha 'oku ma'u ai 'a e melino 'a e 'Otua, he 'oku pehee pe 'a e TAHA 'ia Kalaisi.

Hangee pe ko 'Ene Kolee, 'oku ou kole atu, ke tau loto'aki, lotu'aki, ngaue'i mo mo'ui 'aki. Ke Tau Taha Mu'a kotoa pe, 'o hangee ko e taha 'a e 'Alo mo e Tamaii. 'E malava ia neongo 'ene faingata'aa, 'okapau 'oku tau taha mo e 'Otuaa foki 'ia Kalaisi ko hotau Koeli, 'aia na'e 'a'ana pea 'oku kei 'a'ana 'a e Kole 'oku ou fai atu ni. Ko 'etau tukulolo kotoa pe kiate IA, 'o fai hono finangalo kae tuku hotau ngaahi loto, 'e lava ai ke tau TAHA. Fehu'i ma'upe mu'a pe ko e ha e lea, sio, to'onga, mo e ngaue 'e fai ai e lelei mo ha taha kehee pea ke fai ia. Koe ki'i kaveinga hangatonu, mo mahino ngofua, ka 'oku matu'aki fiema'u ke fakahoko 'i he 'etau fakakaukau mo 'etau

mafihunga kotoa ke lava ke ma'u ai 'a e Taha 'oku kolea 'e Sisu. Koe'uhii ko e ha kainga? Hangee pe ko 'Ene kole na'e fai 'i he 'Ene lotu - **koe'uhii ke tui 'a mamani na'e fekau mai IA 'e he Ene Tamai.** Ko hota talaa ee, Kalisitiane Tonga 'o e Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Silaa. He taa ko 'etau tahaa 'e tui ai 'a mamani kia Sisu Kalaisi mo Hono 'Uhingaa.

“He na'e 'ofa pehee 'a e 'Otua ki mamani, ko ia na'a ne foaki hono 'Alo tofu-pe-taha-ne-fakatupu, koe'uhi ko ia kotoa pe 'oku tui pikitai kia te ia ke 'oua na'a 'auha, kae ma'u 'a e mo'ui ta'engata.” Si'eku fanau 'i he 'Eiki, 'e tui pikitai 'a mamani kia te IA, pea te nau hao mei he 'auha 'o ma'u 'a e mo'ui ta'engata, 'i he 'enau vakai mai ki he 'etau TAHA.

Kuo kamata 'a 'eku 'a'ahi atu ki he ni'ihi 'o hotau ngaahi fai'anga lotu 'i he faka'amu mo e taumu'a ke u a'u atu kiate kimoutolu hono kotoa 'i he 'uluaki faingamalie pe. 'Oku ou lotu atu mo hapai faka'aho kimoutolu ki he to'ukupu 'o e 'Otua Mafimafi pea 'oku ou kole atu ke mou lotu mai ma'aku pea mo 'etau Vahefonua, ke tau TAHA 'ia Kalaisi, pea ke tui ai 'a mamani kia te Ia, pea mo'ui 'a mamani 'i he lelei mo e faka'ofa'ofa 'o 'etau Taha. 'Oku ou tu'a 'ofa 'atu kiate kimoutolu hono kotoa.

Polokalama Laulotaha 'a e Potungau 'a Fafine 'o e Vahe Uelingatoni

Na'e lava mai 'a Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta 'o malanga mo fakaleva 'a e polokalama tokoni sikolasipi mo fakaako ki he fanauako kolisi 'e toko 20tupu 'o e Vahe Uelingatoni. Ko e polouseki ngaue 'eni 'a e Potungau 'a Fafine 'o e Vahe Uelingatoni 'aia 'oku ngaue fakataha kiai 'a e kakai fefine 'o e ngaahi Kaingalotu Tonga 'o loto Tawa, Uelingatoni, Petone mo Avalon. 'E toki kau mai pe 'a Upper Hutt 'I ha'anau fiekau mai kiai. Na'e foaki atu ha ngaahi sikolasipi 'a e ni'ihi ko 'eni mo e faingamalie tokoni'i fakafaiako:-

Ko e konga mahu'inga 'e taha 'o e Polouseki Laulotaha ko hono fakaafea ha kau paate'i faiako ke nau hoko ko e Taakaua fakafo'ituitui (mentor) he ta'u ni kakato ma'ae kau ma'u sikolasipi ko 'eni, 'aia te nau hoko ko e poupu mo e tokoni ofi ma'ae kau sikolasipi ni, pea te nau fengau'aki vaofi mo e 'apiako, matu'a-tauhifaanau mo e taha ako (mentee) ke tokoni'i kinautolu 'i he 'enau ako 'aia ko kinautolu 'eni:

'Aisea Laukau, Joy Tu'itupou, Teleiosi Peini, Nunia Ngauamo, Tufitau'ao Fakava, Lute Langi mo Solomone Ngauamo. Na'e fakaafe'I aipe 'a Dr Nasili Vaka'uta ke hoko ko e Talekita 'o e Polouseki Laulotaha.

Ko e kumi pa'anga pe 'a e kakai fefine 'o fakapa'anga 'aki e ngaahi sikolasipi ni. Ko e kau komiti ko Valeti Finau, Nunia Fahamokioa, Alapeta Faletau, Tongi'aepau Nuku, Moe'ia Taufalele, Senorita Laukau, 'Eves Vao. 'Oku 'oatu 'enau fakamalo ki he poupu 'oku fai 'ehe kau takilotu mo e ngaahi kaingalotu. Ka 'oku 'a e 'Otua 'a e Ngeia mo e Langilangi kotoa pe.



Ko e meimei kotoa 'ena 'o e faanauako kolisi na'e foaki 'enau sikolasipi. 'Oku haa mei mui 'a Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta, pea mo Valeti Finau ko e Taki 'o e Potungau 'a Fafine 'o e Vahe Uelingatoni.

Name	School & Year
1. Haifine 'Aisea	Naenae College, Year 11
2. Ngairi Speedy	Sacred Heart College, Year 9
3. Rick Tu'itupou	Porirua College, Year 11
4. Lavinia Nuku	Tawa College, Year 10
5. Tu'ipulotu Nuku	Scots College, Year 13
6. 'Anaseini Nuku	Tawa College, Year 9
7. 'Otutolu Fahamokioa	Wellington College, Year 13
8. Sieli Finau	Onslow College, Year 10
9. Mosee Fahamokioa	Wellington College, Year 9
10. Siaso Pouvalu	Rongotai College, Year 11
11. 'Iisapeti Pouvalu	Wellington East Girls, Year 10
12. Seini Valu	Wellington East Girls, Year 10
13. Lisipa Katoa	Wellington East Girls, Year 9
14. Tonga Paongo	Mana College, Year 9
15. Chanel O'toole Williamson	Tawa College, Year 11
16. Sione Toili Latu	Wellington College, Year 12
17. Kalemani Tonga	Taita College, Year 12
18. Likiafu Tonga	Taita College, Year 11
19. Paea Tonga	Taita College, Year 9
20. Siaso Laukau	Naenae College, Year 11
21. 'Ofa Laukau	Hutt Valley High, Year 11
22. 'Akanesi Laukau	Taita College, Year 10
23. Sione Katoa	St Bernards, Year 10
24. Sekope Katoa	St Bernards, Year 9
25. Mate Muliikiha'amea	Taita College, Year 9
26. Paula Havea	Taita College, Year 9

Fakataha 'a e Kau Taki 'U Vahefonua

Na'e fakahoko 'a e fuofua fakataha 'o e ta'u ni 'a e Kau Taki Fakavahefonua 'o e Tauivi pe ko e ngaahi matakali Palangi, Tonga, Ha'amoia mo e Fisi 'i he 'api siasi 'i he Bader Drive 'i Mangere meihe efiapi Falaite 'aho 6 ki he Sapate 'aho 8 'o Ma'asi. Ko e fakataha ko 'enii 'oku tu'oku tolu pe fa he ta'u pea 'oku kau atu kiai 'a Rev Setaita Kinahoi Veikune mo Tevita Finau.

'I he taha 'o e ngaahi alea 'o e fakataha ni ne fakafongia 'i lelei tokotaha pe ai 'e Setaita 'a e tui 'a e Vahefonua Tonga mo kitautolu Tonga tokolahi. Na'a ne lea lotolahi mo hangatonu 'o toe fakamahino'i mo fakamamafa'i 'a e tui 'a e Vahefonua Tonga ki he 'ikai te nau tali ke faifekau pe ma'u lakanga fakataki he siasi ha taha KEI pe ko ha fefine pe tangata 'oku nonofo pe nofo mali pe 'a e tangata mo e fefine. Na'e mo'ulongoa 'a e fu'u fakataha ni 'i ha taimi lahi, pea toki lea mai 'a honau taha mo tangi.

Na'e fakalongo pe 'a e kau fakafongia Ha'amoia mo e kau Fisi neongo 'oku nau taku 'oku tau tui tatau. 'Oku 'ikai ko ha me'a fo'ou 'eni 'a e taimi 'oku tau folau pehe ni aii pea 'oku fakalongo pe kinautolu mo hekeheka pe he funga 'aa. 'Oku 'oatu 'a e fakamalo 'i he lotu mo e poupu mai 'a kimoutolu 'i ha fa'ahinga founga pe. 'Oku kei kavekavea'u 'a e Vahefonua Tonga 'i hono tu'uaki mo mamahi'i 'a e 'uuni me'a 'oku tau tui kiai.